GUIDING GROWTH IN READING



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GUIDING GROWTH IN READING

IN THE MODERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Margaret G. McKim

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

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To the teachers and children whose activities fill these pages and to my parents, Bessie Thomas McKim and Louis Thompson McKim, this book is gratefully and affectionately dedicated.

FOREWORD

A GREAT many teachers will find this the most helpful book on the teaching of reading that has appeared in a long time. Whether the teacher is inexperienced and relatively inept or experienced and highly skilled, or any point between these extremes, she will find this book a treasury of helpful suggestions.

This volume is the result of a remarkably successful effort to survey all areas of research, practice, and theory for suggestions relating to the teaching of reading and then to organize and present them in a treatise designed specifically to help the teacher in her daily work. It is not a typical survey of research findings, but it is evident that the author has canvassed the fields of research and made use of all she regarded as pertinent. Although it is not a treatise on the basal, psychological theories of learning and teaching, it embodies a well-conceived system of psychological principles and uses them consistently.

The book is "practical" at every step, but it is not a mere collection of professional admonitions or lesson plans or descriptions of teaching devices, or procedures. It is a remarkable synthesis of information gathered from all sources and fashioned into a clear, lucid statement of the steps to take to become a better teacher of reading. It advocates no particular kind of curriculum, but should be equally helpful to teachers in all types of schools.

This book reflects the results of years of work in the classroom as observer of and adviser to many kinds of teachers in many types of schools, combined with the training of teachers, both experienced and inexperienced, in the author's own classes and with a diligent study of the literature. The book is remarkably free of vague generalizations and pedagogical jargon. The writing is simple and exact, unfamiliar technical terms are avoided, explanations are clear and pertinent, and practical suggestions are illustrated in a wealth of

detailed reports of actual classroom activities, conversations, discussions, demonstrations, schedules, and other concrete data. Many teachers cooperated with Professor McKim to make this a *teacher's* book. The teacher can really understand it.

Professor McKim's book is a comprehensive report. Few are the problems or questions likely to be raised by a teacher which are not discussed frankly, fully, and constructively. The book advocates neither a new revolutionary theory nor a new practical "system"; it presents, rather, a sound and sensible guide to making the best use of the information and facilities now at our disposal for teaching reading. Let this statement not mislead anyone to assume that this volume is merely another report of "the same old stuff." It can be read with profit by anyone, not only the schoolteacher and principal, but also the reading specialist, and the most advanced reading investigator. This is a book which will do more than merely tell one how to make better use of all the available materials and methods of teaching reading. It will give a teacher new insights and equip her with general principles which will enable her the better to solve the many new problems certain to appear in the future.

ARTHUR I. GATES

PREFACE

THIS BOOK is for classroom teachers.

It is not meant to add one volume more to the many now available which provide such excellent insights into the wealth of research in the field of reading and its bearing on the reading program in the modern school. Rather, it tries to answer the classroom teacher's frequent question, "Yes, but just how do I go about it with my children?"

Answers to questions of how to teach, while grounded in sound psychological principles and thoughtful consideration of existing research, reside, in their details, in the classrooms of creative teachers. The writer has tried to record and to interpret what she has been taught about the teaching of reading by the teachers and children with whom she has been privileged to work.

The focus of this volume is on the modern elementary-school classroom with its unit activities, its emphasis on pupil-teacher planning, and its concern for the maximum growth of each individual toward effective citizenship in the world of which he is a part. Most of the suggestions are not, however—the writer firmly believes—beyond the realm of possibility for the teacher who is working in a situation where resources are somewhat more limited or possibilities for grouping, scheduling, and program planning are not as flexible as those in some of the situations that have been used for illustrative purposes.

The discussion of teaching problems has been centered around three general stages of growth in learning to read: the prereading and beginning-reading period: the growth of primary children toward independent reading skills; and the development of the more mature techniques of the intermediate grades. A fourth section adds suggestions for appraising progress and for planning remedial help. Within this general framework, there has been no attempt to suggest

a program grade by grade. Children will differ in their reading skills from that beginning September day when they walk into the kindergarten or first grade. Every teacher faces the problem of adjusting materials and methods to a wide range of abilities. Within the growth stages that have been indicated, an effort has been made to show how reading skill develops and to indicate how activities may be varied to meet differing needs. Primary teachers may find some of the suggestions for work with older children appropriate to their purposes, while teachers of intermediate grades may find themselves using the simpler approaches more typical of work with younger children.

Teachers will need to skim to use this book effectively. It is not short, because the details of classrooms in action take time to spell out. It is repetitive in parts. Teaching reading is complex, and a single activity rarely contributes to one skill alone. Whenever possible, cross references to related sections are given, but an area of emphasis, a teaching technique, or a general principle is mentioned again when it seems that the full story cannot be told without it. Sections within chapters are organized around what seem to be major teaching problems. Section and paragraph headings, and in some cases side headings, have been used in an effort to provide help in the easy location of specific areas of interest.

This book is intentionally rich in the variety of detailed suggestions. It is the hope of the author that it will indicate goals which will challenge the experienced teacher as well as provide practical ideas for the novice. Beginning teachers should not expect to achieve immediately in their classrooms the complex organization of some of the situations that are described, and, if the book truly serves its purpose, experienced teachers should find more specific suggestions than they would use with any one class.

Although teaching suggestions have been given in detail, prescriptions have been avoided. Every classroom is different and the test of a procedure is its effectiveness in meeting the needs of a particular group of children. A conscientious effort has been made to identify underlying principles which the teacher can use as guides in making the adjustments appropriate to her situation. It is the writer's conviction that the ultimate success of a reading program depends upon the insights, sensitivity, and good judgment of the individual classroom teacher.

The typical lists of study-guide questions for students have been omitted. Instead, each chapter closes with questions suggested as a

basis for appraising the aspect of the reading program under discus sion. It is hoped that these may be of help to teachers studying the reading activities of their classes, and to school faculties as they go about their never-ending professional obligation of building better school programs for boys and girls.

MARGARET G. MCKIM

Cincinnati, Ohio

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MANY PEOPLE have helped in the writing of this book. To the teachers with whom the writer has worked go special thanks. In the classrooms she has visited, in cooperative work with her in the guidance of student teachers, and in her college classes, both graduate and undergraduate, they have been generous in sharing their insights, their ways of working with children, and their problems. Their thinking is reflected on every page, in so many ways that it is impossible to give special credit except where actual classroom records are quoted. The writer can only hope that they can find themselves, and that they are accurately reported.

The writer is also grateful to the administrative personnel in the Cincinnati Public Schools and in the schools of neighboring communities who have done much to make available to the faculty and students of the University of Cincinnati the extended contacts with children so vital to good teacher education. Special thanks go to Dr. Althea Beery of the Cincinnati Public Schools for her most careful critical reading of the entire manuscript and to Miss Fannie J. Ragland, also of the Cincinnati Public Schools, for her helpful reaction to the manuscript as a whole.

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PART I

LEARNING TO READ IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS

CHAPTER I

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ABLE TO READ?

ADULTS READ IN TODAY'S WORLD

Adults read for pleasure. In a small town Mrs. Bairns finishes the supper dishes and settles down with the latest book passed on to her by another member of the local book club. Her husband is looking at the evening paper. In his spare time he is reading a history of the early settlement of his state. Side by side in a city subway train three passengers shorten their homeward journey with books. One has a Pocket Book, one a comic book, and one a copy of the latest Broadway hit play. In a beauty shop Miss Brown catches up with her favorite movie magazine. As she goes home she purchases the latest number of a popular woman's magazine. Stacked in the magazine rack of one suburban home are *Reader's Digest, The Saturday Evening Post, Time, Life,* and *Better Homes and Gardens.* In the bookcases of the couple next door are sets of Dickens, Scott, and Stevenson; O. Henry's works; and the poems of Longfellow, Robert W. Service, and Edgar Guest. *The National Geographic* is one of the favorite magazines of this family. For their twelve-year-old son they also subscribe to *Popular Mechanics.* On the living-room table are a King James version of the *Bible,* a revised edition of the *New Testament,* and the hymn book of the local church. In the house next door are copies of *The Sea Around Us* and a recent popular biography. The sixteen-year-old son in this family has just discovered an anthology of stories of Sherlock Holmes. The daughter, at the moment preoccupied with a letter from her fiancé, has been engrossed in cookbooks and articles on home decoration.

Adults read for specific information. In her farm kitchen Mrs. Martin locates her favorite recipe for blackberry jam. Then she reads the instructions on the bottle of special preservative she plans to use. Outdoors her husband is following the directions for assembling a new piece of farm equipment. Later in the day Mrs. Martin makes out an order from a mail-order catalog. In the city Mrs. Green looks up the bus schedule as she prepares to go shopping to look at the bargains advertised in last

night's paper. In his office her husband reads the daily mail and checks several orders that have just come in. He looks at his calendar to note the appointments his secretary has made for him and proofreads some letters. He then looks carefully through a new set of building regulations to see if they apply to him. Later in the day he reads through the details of a new fire insurance policy. Dr. Allen brings home the latest copy of a medical journal, and looks for recent information on a new drug he is considering for one of his patients. The principal of the local school scans the *NEA Journal* and reads a new professional book with care to see if it should be purchased for the school library. His son, in a workshop in the basement, is following instructions for building an amateur radio set. In the evening in many homes, people turn to daily or weekly papers to keep up with local or world events, read editorials on a coming election issue, check on the standing of the local baseball team, look at gardening or beauty hints, or read weather reports.

Adults read to locate material bearing on a problem. Mr. Johns has spent the afternoon in the professional library of his firm looking for research on a new chemical process. Mrs. Owen has a report to make to the local Parent-Teacher Association on trends in the use of comic books. She and the librarian have spent the afternoon tracking down studies. Mrs. Clay turns to the dictionary for help in spelling a word. Later in the day she looks up a friend's phone number in the directory. On their vacation the Joneses follow road maps with care and turn to automobile club guides for places to stay. One of the worst parts of their trip was when they had to follow detour signs through a strange city. Before he settles down for the evening Mr. Thomas turns to the radio and television programs. To locate them in his paper he uses the index. A little later he is interrupted by Betty, aged 10, who is trying to find some information for school on the industries of the Eastern states. Together they consult the family encyclopedia. They also try the index in her geography text and check maps in an atlas.

Adults read aloud to share materials with others. Mr Harte is in a secluded corner of the house practicing the speech he is to give to the local lodge. Mrs. White has just finished putting the children to bed and reading them their usual bedtime story. Now she comes downstairs with her mending while Mr. White reads parts of the evening paper aloud to her. At the meeting of the local agricultural society Mrs. Nelson reads the minutes of the previous meeting and Mr. Gardener reads the financial report. Downtown at the radio station the announcer reads the news and then four local merchants refer to their parts of the script for a panel discussion. On Sunday morning the Sunday School superintendent reads aloud the lesson and parts of the hymns. The drama circle of one community meets once a month to read plays, the poet's corner in another meets to read poetry aloud; and the group of professional men in a third meets to present papers.

Reading is one of the communication arts. It takes its place as a way of receiving ideas along with listening to people directly, listening to the radio, watching television or motion pictures, and varied other means of communication. In spite of the growing influence of other media, much of the Western world is a reading world. We use language in printed form as a guide to daily activities so automatically that we are scarcely aware of it. We turn to daily papers, to books, and to magazines for help in making up our minds on controversial issues; for advice on health, housekeeping, and love affairs; for vicarious thrills as we go deep-sea diving with the experts, climb a Himalayan mountain, live the lives of our heroes or heroines in the public eye, or shudder at the report of a local crime; for relaxation, as we settle down for a few minutes with a favorite type of book or magazine; or for the esthetic satisfaction of reading beautiful prose or poetry. Our attitudes toward other races and nations, our levels of aspiration for our standards of living, and our judgments on moral issues are to some extent affected by what we read.

In a democratic society it is particularly important that citizens be skilled readers, not only in their ability to understand the printed page but also in their ability and disposition to evaluate what they have read in the light of its accuracy, the source from which it has come, its fairness, and the presence or absence of emotional tones in its presentation. On local issues an informed citizen has a direct influence by his vote on the composition of the city council and school board, the passage of a bond issue for local improvements, the success of a tax levy for the schools. On the national and international scene the influence of the individual, though more remote, is still felt. A lasting peace may well depend on how clearly informed national groups understand the values, forms of government, and needs, not only of nations they regard as allies but also of those to whom they find themselves in opposition; on group attitudes toward the United Nations, the use of atomic energy, and the demands and obligations of international cooperation.

CHILDREN READ IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS

The reading problems of adulthood have their counterpart in the problems faced by children in elementary school classrooms. From the first day of school, teachers help children learn to use reading to serve the same types of purposes as it does for their parents. The difference is in the degree of complexity, not in the type of problem.

What reading activities would a visitor to a modern elementary school observe?

Children read for pleasure. Five-year-old Harry in the kindergarten has spent the last fifteen minutes examining page by page the pictures in an alphabet book. Similar experiences have occurred previously in Harry's home as he shared his favorite books with Daddy and Mother at bedtime.

Marian, in the first grade, is at the library table rereading some primer stories with which she has recently worked in a reading group. John sits beside her looking at the pictures in a book about animals. Children in this first grade, like those in other classes in the school, look forward to times when the teacher reads stories to them.

In one second grade, the children have just finished reading some Hallowe'en stories. This is a special treat, but these children also look forward to the basal-reader stories they read regularly. In another second grade the most advanced readers have planned to work for the next two weeks on easy library books which their teacher helped them choose.

On a third-grade bulletin board is a letter from a classmate, now in another state. A group in another class has found that easy basal-reader stories provide excellent supplementary reading. Another third grade has appointed a librarian to help keep the library table in order. This school has no access to community library facilities, but teachers have systematically added to room collections and there is some borrowing back and forth on special occasions.

In a fourth grade, the children prefer to keep their library books in their desks so that they can be reached more easily in spare minutes. John was hard to wean from his comic books until the librarian found him some easy adventure stories. One group of children in this class has just finished an interesting reading unit on folk and fairy tales, using several basal readers at their reading level. They are planning to dramatize the ones they like best for the rest of the class.

In a fifth grade, over half the class is engrossed in fictional stories about pioneer days. The children became acquainted with these books when the teacher returned from the library with an armload of them at the beginning of a social-studies unit. On the bulletin board in another class are creative poems in blank verse giving impressions of the recent snowstorm.

The poorest readers in one sixth grade look forward to reading the newest adventures of the characters in an easy basal reader. Another group has a regular sharing period to talk about books before they are returned to the library. On the library table in another class are the copies of a class magazine to which this group has contributed creative stories and poems during the year.

Children read for specific information. In kindergarten, the children know their hooks in the cloakroom because each has a child's name and a special picture symbol beside it. Many of these children can recognize their own mats for rest periods because their names are on them.

In a first grade, Sandy shows his mother the experience record his class dictated after a walk to the park. On the chalkboard in manuscript writing is a letter inviting mothers to a party. On the bulletin board is a list entitled, *What We Need for Our Party.* Next to the easel in another class are simple instructions for cleaning paint brushes.

In a second grade, the children follow carefully the directions for making jelly. On the walls of their store, constructed in one corner of the room, are a list of instructions for the clerks and a list of prices. In their basal readers they have found some stories about stores. Pictures of stores in their neighborhood adorn another bulletin board and captions tell what kinds of stores they are.

One group in a third grade is working with separate stories on animals as part of a unit on pets. On the chalkboard is a list of questions the children are trying to answer. In another third grade, the children have summarized their information on post offices in a series of experience records, now held together with rings and placed on an easel for rereading. In another room the board contains a list of daily news events. Next to it is a daily weather chart kept up to date by various members of the group. When it comes time for spelling, these children turn to the exercises in their spelling book. A little later in the day they will be reading arithmetic problems.

In a fourth grade, the children are working from books on several levels in a study of transportation. On the bulletin board are a number of pictures from magazines and newspapers. Lists of group plans and of committees have been posted. Nearby are fire-drill regulations. In another fourth grade a schedule for the day is written on the front board. Next to it is a list entitled, *If You Finish Early.* On a bulletin board in this room is a chart showing the income from this week's sale of seeds.

One fifth grade has most of its available table space covered with pamphlets on national parks. Science groups in another class have set up a series of experiments suggested in their science textbooks. In a third, children are reporting on interesting news events from a commercially-published children's weekly newspaper. On the bulletin boards in another class are posted the group reports of a study of *Where Our City Gets Its Food.*

In a sixth grade, children are engaged in a group discussion about electricity, following some reading in a common textbook. In another, children are reporting the suggestions in their language book regarding the correct way to punctuate a business letter. In a third, a study of the United Nations is in progress. Each group is using textbooks, current articles from newspapers, encyclopedias, and materials secured from writing to the information centers of various countries. Pamphlets regarding the United Nations itself are also in evidence. A large wall map has been in constant use. On the bulletin board in another room is a set of bar graphs showing a study of traffic conditions on the streets surrounding the school. Children's written interpretations of the graphs are posted below.

Children read to locate material bearing on a problem. In kindergarten, Eleanor is able to tell which of the children's favorite stories her

teacher is going to read today because she knows the pictures on the cover and the general look of the book. These children also know where to look on the bulletin board to see if anyone has a birthday.

In a first grade, Dora knows what her housekeeping responsibility is for the day because she can read her name, and the helpers' chart has pictures next to the words indicating the tasks to be done. In a reading group in another first grade, the children can find the title to their new story and know how to turn to the correct page.

In a second grade, the children enjoy looking through a picture dictionary. When they start work with a new basal reader they look over the table of contents to see what kinds of stories it will have. For another second grade, whose desire to write outstrips its ability to spell, the teacher has posted all the new words needed in alphabetical lists classified by first letters only.

One third grade has made up a telephone directory as part of some science activities in rigging up a play telephone. This group also knows how to use a simple index to locate information In another third grade, groups reading independently find the information they want from a short bibliography posted by the teacher. The children in another class have set up a simple classification system for their classroom library so that they will be able to find things more quickly. These children know how to use pictures and headlines to locate articles in their weekly children's newspaper.

In a fourth grade, children build their own bibliography for a study of Mexico by looking through several social-studies textbooks and other materials borrowed from the library by the teacher and writing down the pages which seem to fit. Chapter titles and paragraph and section headings help in this as much as the index does. Children in still another fourth grade take pride in seeing how many of the words they need to spell they can find in the dictionary They are even more adept at this when they use the dictionary in the back of their spelling book.

In a fifth grade the children turn to the *World Almanac* to settle an argument about population figures when two textbooks disagree. A "Manners Committee" in another fifth grade has checked the contents of several language books to find advice on how to behave when the class invites its principal to lunch. Children in this class made extensive use of the classroom encyclopedia in locating information about materials from which clothing is made. Another group is becoming quite adept in using the diacritical marks in the glossary in its basal-reader series. Children in this class made their first extensive use of maps in a study of the states in which they spent their vacations.

As part of the project of publishing their own paper, the children in a sixth grade have made a study of newspapers. They have been greatly interested in learning how to get information quickly from a feature article by judicious use of headline and opening paragraph. In another sixth grade the children are using the dictionary as an aid in their study of roots, prefixes, and suffixes. A third group has spent several periods

with the librarian, learning to look up needed information for themselves

Children read aloud to share materials with others. In the kindergarten the children enjoy joining in rhyming finger plays. Many of them also take great delight in supplying names and repetitive phrases when the teacher reads their favorite stories aloud. When they invite their mothers to visit them in the spring, Ronnie, as master of ceremonies, names the items on the program from a picture list.

Helen, in first grade, is practicing reading a primer story aloud so that she can take it home to read to her mother. Children in another first grade take pleasure in reading parts of a story in a basal reader aloud to each other just to show how well they are learning to read. In still another class Josie and her group take turns reading two lines apiece from the report on their recent trip to see the lunchroom kitchen.

In a second grade, the children have just been invited to send a group to read stories to the kindergarten. In another class the children are getting ready to read their rainy day poems to their mothers. In yet another, story time has been set aside when those who can read a story well may share it with a small group.

In a third grade, groups are getting ready to read their first social studies reports to the rest of the class. In a reading group the children have enjoyed taking turns reading a story aloud while others in the group acted it in pantomime.

In a fourth grade, the children in one reading group are in the midst of getting ready for a make believe radio program. They will read the parts of their story from behind a sheet stretched over the cloakroom doorway. During social studies work periods the children in this class have devised a system of letting the better readers read some of the harder books aloud while their group listens.

In a fifth grade a heated argument has developed. Alex says, "My book says so, right here," and reads aloud a passage. Jim answers, "That's not in my book. It says . . ." This class has been learning to read Christmas poems as its share in an assembly program.

In a sixth grade, the children have been working with a tape recorder to improve their oral reading skill. When the club meets in another sixth grade, Jim reads the minutes of the meeting. In another class children share the results of a study of *How We Vote* with another group by reading their reports aloud. One group in this class had fun reading the parts of a play found in a basal reader.

These are modern elementary classrooms in action. They are rich in their invitations to read. Where there once were sets of forty copies of a single text, now there are likely to be smaller sets of several series, or at least other books to supplement an adopted text. This is true not only of basal readers but of textbooks in content fields. Children in these classrooms also have access to reference

materials of many sorts. Classroom libraries provide for recreational and informational reading, and in many situations these are supplemented by resources in school and community libraries. Home resources of magazines and daily papers are tapped. Special materials, unavailable elsewhere, are sometimes written by the teacher, or by teacher and children together. In addition, bulletin boards and chalkboards provide many other types of reading experiences. Children live and work in a school world where it is important to be able to read.

Children in these classrooms know what they are about. They have had a part in thinking through what is to be done and why it is important. Among the most important skills they learn, from the kindergarten and first grade on, are those related to carrying forward a project independently, either alone or, more often, as cooperative group members. The plans on the bulletin boards, the lists of jobs to be done, or the special problems to be answered through wide reading, all have meaning because the children have helped to set them up and have talked them through. Children turn to their reading in these classrooms with clear purposes in mind.

Teachers are important in these situations. They guide plans and identify new problems or areas of study. They are the ones who help to locate new materials, supply needed information, and teach new skills; who challenge the accuracy of a report or suggest a better way of working. It is part of their job to study the needs of the children in their classes and to make sure that a program of activities leading to well-rounded development is being provided. In these classrooms, however, teachers can often be found working with small groups or individual children rather than with the class as a whole. This freedom to give individualized attention is possible because children have been helped to develop good habits of independent and cooperative work.

These children must think while they read. From their first reading experiences, they are called upon to make thoughtful and critical judgments. This is as true of Dick, in first grade, helping to reread an experience record to make sure nothing important about a recent excursion has been left out, as of Ruth, in sixth grade, trying to decide if she has enough information to prepare her part of a group report; of six-year-old Billy, who complains that animals really don't talk, as of eleven-year-old Don, who finds that the dates given in two of his history books disagree. It is important to read class plans

accurately when your group is depending on you; to be careful about how you read to prepare your report when the whole class is going to look to you for information; and to have an opinion about why you liked a story in a basal reader when your group must decide whether to share it with the rest of the class.

Allowance is made in these classrooms for a range of needs, interests, and abilities; for capitalizing on strengths and for giving help where there are weaknesses. The children work together as a total class, but they also work in groups and undertake some individualized activities. Their reading materials are selected to care for a range in reading skills. When special practice is provided, it, too, is planned to meet specific needs. These adjustments to individual and group needs are possible partly because teachers take children into the planning process and partly because teachers work under flexible schedules.

These are learning situations that extend beyond the covers of books, the doorways of the classroom, and the boundaries of the school grounds. The children go into their communities to get information and invite community resource people to the school. Problems that are real to children in their daily lives find a place in their classrooms. Studies of other times and other lands are planned so that their bearing on the modern world, as children see it, can be explored. In these settings children find many purposes for reading, and many things to read about, but they also learn how to use their reading as one of many avenues to knowledge and to personal satisfaction.

WHAT MAKES FOR A SKILLFUL READER?

What skills does it take to meet the reading demands of the modern world? Toward what goals should the reading programs in today's schools be directed? The specific answer, for any one classroom, comes from the teacher's analysis of the abilities of her children and the reading problems that are being raised for them by their day-by-day activities. The suggestions that follow represent only one of many possible ways of looking at the problem as a whole.

A skillful reader understands what he reads. Reading is a tool. We read for something—to be entertained, to secure information, to follow directions, to solve a problem. The skilled reader has learned to turn to his reading with clear purposes. He possesses the experience background and the stock of word meanings that enable

him to interpret accurately what he reads. He looks at words, sentences, and paragraphs in the light of what they have to offer for his purposes. He is alert and receptive to new ideas. When he is reading to answer a specific question, he has learned to identify and to read as carefully as necessary the sections of the material that bear most directly on his problem, and he is sensitive to cues in context and format that tell him whether new material is likely to be helpful. When what he is reading contains illustrative material, he is disposed to examine it with his problem in mind. When he reads fiction, he thinks about the plot, the characters, or other aspects of the story that interest him. He understands what he reads.

It is with the problem of clear understanding that beginning-reading experiences start. As the child learns that words have a message for him and begins to turn to them for information, teachers help him take his first steps toward developing the skills he will need eventually to get meaning from printed symbols quickly and easily. Reading for meaning continues to be basic to all his reading experiences throughout his life, in school and out.

A skillful reader deals efficiently with the symbols he meets. Clear understandings can be obscured if the reader is not efficient in the way he works with printed symbols. Reading is one of the language arts. Long before he learns to read, the child learns to use words to express himself and to understand the words others are saying to him. Soon after he enters first grade, he begins to work with words in printed form. He must learn to recognize them, know what they mean, be able to tell them from other words with similar configurations, and eventually learn how to work out their pronunciation for himself.

Skillful reading calls for much more than mere identification of words. As the reader typically meets them, words are presented in phrases, sentences, or paragraphs. This is true even of preprimer materials. In one of the earliest studies of the way people read, Buswell [1] demonstrated that an effective reader senses the phrase units that best convey the meaning of a passage. The progress of his eyes across a line is irregular, but forward-moving. The more skillful he is, the less frequently he has to look back to restudy a word, to catch more accurately the beginning of a line, or to sense the mean-

[1] Guy Thomas Buswell, *Fundamental Reading Habits: A Study of Their Development.* Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 21. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922.

ing of a phrase. The skillful reader also learns to adjust his reading rate. He knows how to skim material from which he wants only general information and how to proceed slowly when every phrase in an article demands his attention. When he reads aloud, he has the added problem of conveying the meaning of a passage to others through skillful use of his voice.

Most reading matter calls for skills in addition to efficiency with words, sentences, and paragraphs. Paragraph headings, section headings, chapter summaries, pictures, graphs, maps, and other such ways of adding to the meaning of a passage also have to be interpreted. Then, as the reader seeks to locate materials for himself, he must be able to use a dictionary, an index, an encyclopedia, a table of contents, and other aids to the location of materials.

These are not the abilities of the adult reader alone. A beginner works with sentences and very short paragraphs. He will meet chapter titles, and perhaps section headings. By the end of the first year he will have examined tables of contents. Even a first-grader has times when he does not want to read a story carefully, but skims it for a general impression. Sometimes he reads silently to himself, and sometimes he reads aloud to a group. Every reader, at his own level, faces problems of working efficiently with the materials he reads.

A skillful reader adjusts his techniques to the purposes for which he reads. The most effective reading techniques do not operate automatically in the same way in all situations. They are flexible in terms of the reader's purposes and the material at hand. There is, for example, no one best way of skimming or of reading carefully. Skimming several books to see if they are likely to give help on a problem and skimming a single passage in a history text to recheck a date are different processes. Reading the details of an arithmetic problem for the first time and rereading a basal-reader story to get the details of a scene in order to draw a picture are done in different fashions. There is no one best way of analyzing a word. In one setting a complete phonetic analysis may be needed. In other, context clues and beginning letters may be enough. The skillful reader understands how to vary his approach appropriately for his problem and his material.

Children face problems of adjusting their reading skills as they read for different purposes. Even beginners work with a variety of materials and purposes as they move back and forth from various types of classroom records, signs, and notices to the simple story-type

materials of their preprimers. In classrooms where children use materials in many ways, flexible adjustment of techniques to purposes is always part of the problem.

A skillful reader evaluates what he reads. Ability to make critical evaluations as one reads has already been identified as an important reading skill in a democratic society. It calls for decisions both as to the accuracy of the information secured and as to its adequacy. The skillful reader knows how to check on his sources of information. Experiences with conflicting reports, with articles written to make an emotional appeal to the reader, with statements which, though accurate, give only part of the picture, and with different writing styles have helped him build standards for his judgments and techniques for the critical appraisal of what he has read. The skillful reader also knows how to decide when he has located sufficient material to solve his problem. In some cases, information from a single authority may be sufficient. In others, the reader may withhold judgment in spite of all the information he has found. The intelligent reader not only understands what he reads but he brings to that understanding all the critical judgment that his previous experiences have developed.

Children who are reading widely to solve problems face many situations where critical evaluation is important. To prepare reports they must select the information they need. Source books will sometimes disagree. Information in older books may prove to be inadequate. Even a single basal-reader story may raise questions and comments such as the following: "The schoolroom in this picture does not look like ours." "We don't use the kind of machinery on our farms that this farmer seems to be using." "Did things like that really happen in pioneer days?" Critical judgments are almost always part of the process of reading thoughtfully with clear purposes in mind.

A skillful reader likes to read. The reading program has fallen short of its goal if it does not result in readers who enjoy books. All reading is not problem solving. Those who read widely have explored many types of literature—fiction, biography, science, philosophy, and history; prose, poetry, and drama. Through their reading experiences they have become sensitive to the impressions the author is giving as well as to the words he uses. They have learned to sense the mood of a poem and to despair or rejoice as a biography unfolds. Their experiences with good writing enable them to respond with esthetic satisfaction to apt choice of words and phrases and beauty of sen-

tence-structure. People who have learned to enjoy reading have developed standards of critical judgment regarding the literary, emotional, and esthetic values of what they read.

Children whose parents read stories to them begin to develop reading tastes and interests even before they come to school. Classroom libraries and school or community libraries help to expand their acquaintance with books. Stories in basal-reader series are planned so as to give many different types of reading experiences. Texts and supplementary books open doorways to their physical world, to their country, and to other lands. The modern elementary school is rich in opportunities to develop reading interests and tastes.

A skillful reader knows when to turn to books for help. Reading is only one means of communication. Printed words are abstractions. Their meaning depends, in part, on the kind of firsthand experience the reader brings to his reading. It is one thing to read about the Rocky Mountains, or even to see motion pictures of them, and another to motor through them. Going to visit the slums in one's city adds something important to newspaper editorials on housing. Reading about how to teach children to read and walking into a classroom to do the job are very different experiences. The skillful reader knows how and when to use reading effectively. He also knows how and when to turn to other sources of information.

Children in today's schools learn to explore their world through many avenues other than books. Even in the first grade they learn the difference between the trip they took and what they were able to record of it on an experience record; between reading about a rabbit and having someone's pet bunny in the school to watch. Older children learn what museum have to offer, evaluate motion pictures, and take trips to collect information. They live in a real world, to which books make many kinds of contributions. Their reading experiences teach them how to read, and how to be thoughtful about what they read. They also learn when to read and how to supplement their reading so that what they are studying comes alive.

A CHALLENGE TO TEACHERS

Reading is an important aspect of living, in school and out. It serves many different purposes, and it calls for a wide variety of skills, attitudes, and understandings. To teach children to meet the varied reading demands of today's world is at once a crucial task for educa-

tion and an undertaking calling for a high level of skill, insight, and resourcefulness on the part of the teacher.

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CHAPTER II

GUIDES FOR A SUCCESSFUL READING PROGRAM

WHAT ARE the characteristics of reading programs that help children meet with success the reading demands of their daily activities? How are they helped to grow toward adult reading skills? From first grade on, children face varied needs for effective reading. Programs that meet these needs must be equally varied. They cannot be outlined simply. The general principles suggested in this chapter apply to all grade levels. Discussions of specific applications for differing levels of ability are given in the chapters that follow. Experienced teachers may find the guides proposed here useful as an overview, and perhaps as a basis for appraising the activities of their classrooms. Beginners may wish to reread this chapter after they have looked further into the detailed descriptions of programs in action.

EVERY SITUATION MAKES ITS CONTRIBUTION

All the child's reading activities have a place. A child's reading program needs to be thought of as composed of all the situations in which he reads. Some of these will be experiences planned to develop specific skills; some will consist of recreational reading; some will be activities calling for wide reading for information; some will be the experiences offered by the signs and notices around the classroom. Appraisals of the type of reading experience a child is receiving and the skills he is being helped to develop, and decisions regarding next steps need to take the full range of his reading into account. A group in first grade has just developed a book of experience records about helpers in its school. Here may be all the new vocabulary these children can take for the moment. A third-grade group has found in a basal reader some stories that bear directly on a classroom project.

For the time, this could be the best source of informational reading. A fourth grade has discovered the fun of independent recreational reading. Perhaps this is better experience for the present than working on stories in a basal text. Children in a sixth grade read well when they are working silently but do poorly when they read aloud. Some of the plays in a basal reader may provide the balance in activities they need. An ever-present problem in today's classrooms is that of finding time to give all children the help they need. Part of the answer lies in the skill with which use is made of every teaching opportunity and the degree to which activities are coordinated.

Classroom reading problems help to determine teaching emphases. In classrooms rich in opportunities to read, the way in which a child's skill develops and the order and setting in which he meets new problems are determined by his total reading experiences. A reading program may be planned with a general sequence of experiences in mind, but as children venture farther afield in their independent reading it must become increasingly flexible in terms of these new situations and the needs they uncover. Jackie, in Grade I, is using the primer of a standard basal-reader series, but he is also in a classroom where bulletin-board notices and captions to pictures abound, and he has helped prepare several records of group excursions. Who is to say, for sure, what his reading vocabulary is and which of the new words listed in the basal reader will actually need a special introduction? Bob's name begins with *B*, Sidney's with *S*. Will this make a difference in the beginning letters to which they respond most readily in their first word-analysis activities? A workbook for a basal reader may put exercises with an encyclopedia late in the fourth grade, but Miss White's class may need to use this reference aid early in fall. As they try to make an extensive report, children in a sixth grade may find suddenly that simple outlining skills will no longer do. Out of such situations come the day-by-day problems that children are trying to handle as they use reading for many purposes. Their reading programs must help them meet these problems.

All classroom reading materials serve a purpose. The materials used to teach children to read, then, are as varied as the problems they face. Basal readers are important, but they are only one source of reading experience. In first grade, children may also be trying to read several kinds of classroom records. In third grade, they may need help in their first experiences in reading several books for

information. In fifth, they may be working with copies of the classroom encyclopedia. At one time the job may be to learn how to read arithmetic problems accurately; at another, how to find information in a science text without losing time; and at a third, how to interpret an article in a daily paper. A child's reading instruction must be planned so that he is given the help he needs to work with each new type of material successfully. Everything a child reads is potentially a basis for reading instruction, and everything he reads provides an opportunity for him to practice reading skills.

EVERY NEEDED SKILL FINDS ITS PLACE

Reading activities are planned to develop many types of skills. The effective reading program is a broad program. It will be broad of necessity, if it is planned in terms of children's daily reading activities. It needs, also, to be planned consciously to give children an opportunity to develop the full range of reading skills, interests, and attitudes appropriate to their level of development. If it is important for children to learn to adjust the way they read to their purposes, then they need to read for many different reasons—now to answer a specific set of questions, now to enjoy the humor of a story, now to follow directions, again to outline a story so as to propose appropriate scenes for a play. If they are to learn to make critical evaluations of what they read, they must face situations where judgments are important and where information from more than one source needs to be appraised. To be able to read aloud well enough to hold the attention of an audience is a skill that cannot be developed in the first two or three years of school alone. Since reading aloud is an important aspect of adult reading skill, it should find its place among other activities in the intermediate grades. Breadth of reading experiences can be planned from the beginning. Even primer materials can be handled so that children read for different purposes.

Conscious provision for varied reading skills needs to be made, not only through activities designed to focus direct instruction on reading, but also in related classroom activities. In primary classrooms, many types of class lists, plans, experience records, and captions to pictures can call for varied reading skills. With more mature readers, projects in science, social studies, health, and other areas can be planned so that children learn to use their textbooks and supplementary reading materials in many different ways. Recrea-

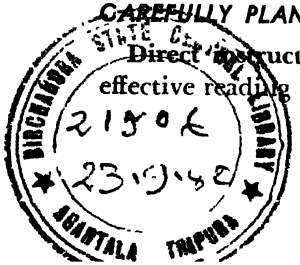
tional reading is possible at all levels. First experiences will, of necessity, be simple and carefully guided by the teacher, but as children grow in independence they can be encouraged to capitalize on their increased skill.

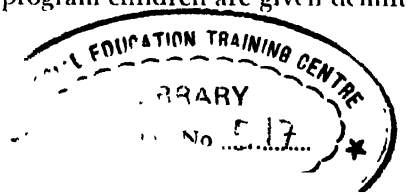
Teaching materials are selected so as to raise many types of reading problems. Varied skills are developed more readily when children work with many types of materials. This is another reason for considering all classroom reading-matter as potential instructional material. Basal reader series are planned, typically, to provide for variety both in content and style. Depending upon their general level of reading ability, children also need the experience of working with brief passages for directions or details; of reading an entire book; of looking for information in the chapters of several books; and of using indexes, tables of contents, dictionaries, encyclopedias, pictures, maps, graphs, and charts. Many types of classroom materials need to be used as a basis for reading instruction if children are to become efficient in their daily reading activities. This variety is equally important as a means of introducing them to new problems and as a method of developing needs for new skills.

Teachers' insights into the nature of skillful reading serve as guides to choice of experiences. Judgments as to what skills need to be emphasized in any given situation depend in large measure upon the insight of the classroom teacher. Johnny says he has read his story, but he comes up with very few right answers. What skills does he lack? It may be that he is reading too rapidly. Perhaps the material is too difficult and he only half-understands many of the words. Perhaps he does not know what he was looking for and needs more help in establishing purposes before he begins to read. What clues to the difficulty the teacher senses, and how she interprets them depend on her insight into how reading skill develops. Children's reading activities need to be guided by a teacher who is competent to develop their reading experiences in terms of their needs, to use materials flexibly, and to provide the appropriate practice. This competence comes through understanding the reading process, the interrelationships among various reading skills, the nature of growth in learning to read, and the particular children in the class.

CAREFULLY PLANNED PRACTICE IS PROVIDED

Direct instruction is planned as needed to develop skill. In an effective reading program children are given definite instruction and





practice. Although a child develops much proficiency by using his reading skills functionally from day to day, this does not mean that all instruction in how to read is incidental to these day-by-day reading experiences. One would not expect a tennis player or a pianist to perfect his techniques without help and without hours of practice focussed on his specific needs. It is equally unrealistic to expect reading skill to improve without guidance. Some of the help will be provided in a planned sequence of activities developed around selected story and informational materials; some will be planned in relation to problems that have arisen in the course of other classroom reading activities; and some will be set up around work-type materials.

A program that provides for definite instruction and practice can still be responsive to classroom needs and individual growth problems. Typically, the highest degree of continuity from day to day is likely to be required for the activities of immature readers. As children become more skilled, their instruction and practice should become more flexible in terms of new reading needs and opportunities to practice reading skills arising from their classroom activities—first-graders decide to read some of their experience records aloud when their mothers come, and stop to practice; third-graders take time away from their basal readers to explore the books in their classroom library; fifth-graders discover that their social-studies textbook is one of their hardest books to read, and work at it as a reading group.

Practice is planned so that children work with reading skills in the way in which they will need them again. "We learn to do by doing" is a psychological principle that has definite implications for teachers of reading. Children need to practice reading skills in situations similar to those in which they will actually be using them. Activities of an artificial nature can be used with profit from time to time to focus a child's attention on a specific aspect of a skill or to highlight a process, but the bulk of his practice needs to be in a typical reading setting. The eventual goal of word-analysis activities, for example, is to help the child identify a new word in its context. His practice, then, needs to be planned so that he has ample opportunity to work with unfamiliar words in context. Work-type activities with guide words or alphabetical order can help to sharpen a child's dictionary skills, but he also needs to work with an actual dictionary in his hands. A skilled rapid reader must be able to see

appropriate phrase units and key words without the benefit of mechanical equipment, flash cards, or paragraphs retyped so that there is an artificial gap from phrase to phrase. The more effectively teachers can capitalize on the child's daily reading experiences, the greater the amount of practice in a natural setting they will be able to provide. When it is important to supplement these experiences with special practice activities, they need to be planned with those situations in mind in which the skill will eventually be used.

Instruction and practice activities are planned so as to start where the child is. All children will not learn to read at the same rate. Factors such as general maturity; experience background; illness or physical defects; intellectual development; social and emotional maturity; and changing from school to school will have their influence. Within any one classroom, teachers need to be prepared for a range of three to five years in ability, or perhaps even more.[1] The reading program needs to be developed so as to take these differences into account. While it is possible to plan so that children are given completely individualized help, the numbers of children in most elementary school classrooms make this solution impracticable. Teachers will need to plan, then, for reading instruction and practice activities to meet the needs of groups working at several reading levels. This means not only finding time during the school day to work with these groups, but also equipping the classroom with reading materials for several different grades. It will be important, as well, to adjust recreational reading and experiences in reading for information to several levels of ability. Furthermore, the types of new reading problems raised by these activities will vary from one level of ability to another, and from child to child within a group. An effective reading program is not easily blocked out. Many types of adjustments are needed if children's reading problems are to be met.

Instruction and practice activities are planned so as to give the child the amount of help he needs. Children in the same class not only will read at many different levels, but they will require different amounts and kinds of instruction and practice. The slightest of suggestions will enable some to work on by themselves. Others will need patient explanations, many planned practice activities, and greatly extended experiences in working with easy materials Effective in-

[1] Robert H. Beck, Walter W. Cook, and Nolan C. Kearney, *Curriculum in the Modern Elementary School*, pp. 27–33. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953.

struction and practice need to be planned so that the child who is ready to move on to challenging classroom reading activities is not held up, while the youngster who is learning more slowly has the extended guidance and experience he needs.

Instruction and practice activities are planned with the sequence of development of reading skill in mind. Almost all the skills needed by an adult have their origin in the much simpler problems of the primary grades. Well-planned instruction does not seek perfection in one series of lessons. Instead, it provides for recurring experiences that enable a child to refine his techniques as he meets new situations that call for greater skill. In the early primary grades it may be the teacher who actually does most of the reading while the children gain their first acquaintance with a process. She reads the first experience records to children at the prereading level while they listen. She finds the first encyclopedia article for able third-graders to read. She makes out the bibliography as fourth-graders face the first project of the year that calls for wide reading. Later, children will be helped to take the initiative in such activities. Eventually they will learn to work independently, with only occasional need for assistance.

Planning for recurring experiences with the same skill does not mean that all children should be expected to take exactly the same steps, or to meet a more difficult problem at exactly the same point in their reading experiences. One group may acquire knowledge about a dictionary gradually; another may learn many of the same basic skills in one series of practice activities. Children in one fourth grade may face the problem of wide reading for information with a background of many such experiences as third-graders. In another school, facilities for wide reading in the primary grades may be limited, and the task of handling reference materials in the fourth grade pose a number of new problems. The richer the child's total reading experiences, the more likely he is to encounter a wide variety of problems early and often. The key to deciding what is needed next lies in the efficiency with which children are meeting their present reading problems and the help that seems most likely to give them more independence in handling new situations. These decisions need to be made by the classroom teacher from her knowledge of how reading skill develops and her insight into the needs of her group.

PURPOSE IS CENTRAL IN ALL ACTIVITIES

Children turn to reading activities with clear purposes in mind. Children who are learning how to read critically, how to solve problems through their reading, and how to adjust their reading techniques to different situations need to read with clear purposes in mind. In their classrooms one seldom hears such assignments as, "Open your books and read the story on page . . . ," or "Let's open our books to page Jill, will you start to read, please?" Instead, plans in which children share are heard. "Let's look at the pictures in our new story. What do you think it will be about? Let's read it and see." "Do these pictures look like the farm we visited? Let's see if the story tells what the differences are." "John thinks this looks like a story we could dramatize. Do you want to think about that as you read?" "These stories about pioneers may help with your social-studies groups. Who has your list of questions?" "Do you remember that you asked for fairy stories like the one we read last week? Here is a group of them in this new reader. Do you each want to report on the one most interesting to you?"

In these situations, the material being read sometimes follows the order of the stories in a basal text and the problem of making the activity purposeful is one of helping children see a reason for reading that is meaningful to them and that guides their thinking as they read. In the reading done for unit activities in areas such as science, social studies, or health, the appropriate materials are those needed to solve the problems raised by teacher and children as they began the unit. If a classroom is equipped with many types of materials, it is usually possible, even with beginners whose reading vocabulary is limited, to make adjustments so that children read about a farm after they have visited one, or enjoy a group of animal stories after they have been to the Zoo or have been talking in class about their pets. With increasing skill in independent reading come endless opportunities to plan experiences with story and informational materials that take varied group purposes into account.

Children share in setting up plans for special practice. In their desire to have children interested in what they read and to help them find that reading is an enjoyable and profitable activity, teachers sometimes forget that the normal youngster can be much interested in seeing himself gain better skill. In an effective reading program children are helped to understand the skills they need and the pur-

poses for which special practice is set up. 'Here are some special stories that will help you remember your new words." 'How did you like the way Allen read that for us? Could we make a list of things to remember when we read out loud?' Today when you finish, I'm going to ask some questions to see how carefully you read 'Yesterday you took all our social studies time just to find what we wanted. Suppose you take out your books today and let's learn to use an index." Situations such as these help to develop children who sense their own problems, who enter willingly into plans to correct their difficulties, and who practice intelligently because they know what they are practicing for.

Incidental reading around the classroom serves a real purpose. Purposeful reading extends to classroom bulletin boards, notices and chalkboards. Rooms are not cluttered with signs and notices that are never read. Children look to class plans, lists of room responsibilities, notices of special events, bulletin board displays, and captions to pictures because these records actually function in helping to keep the day's activities running smoothly. Notices are taken down when they are no longer needed; plans once made are actually used, lists of rules are reread as needed, and experience records serve a purpose after they are originally composed. The classroom environment plays a part in the total reading program because its reading materials are important in children's lives.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ARE MET

Grouping is flexible. Individual needs cannot easily be met unless children work in groups. The problem of grouping is complicated by the fact that children of approximately the same reading level will not have exactly the same needs. Todd reads at fourth grade level, but with such painful slowness that he seldom can be encouraged to read an entire book for recreation. Joanne also reads at fourth grade level, but she tends to skim and misses important details. Sarah has an excellent visual memory for the configurations of words. With skillful use of context, she reads most second grade material without trouble, but she can work out few words for herself. Anne, who is also in second grade, is very proud of her ability to figure out a new word. Children such as these may work together on materials of the same level of difficulty, but they also need individualized help. Other children may start out together, but learn at different rates. Someone may be ill and need special instruction

to catch up. On the other hand, a classroom problem that affects all groups may arise and children with differing reading abilities may need to work together on a project in social studies, science, or health. Meeting individual needs means providing for flexible grouping and individualized help that allow for these and similar problems.

Individual needs find a place within the activities of one group. Teachers who are skillful in meeting individual needs do more than provide for flexible grouping. They also find ways of working with children's special problems within a single group. In a prereading group, the children are dictating their story of their walk around the neighborhood near the school. Those who are almost ready for beginning-reading experiences with preprimer materials are commenting on the shapes of the words the teacher writes and trying to read some of the lines. Those who are least mature are suggesting what needs to be written but not making many attempts to read. In first grade, the teacher is giving a quick review of new words. "Jerry," she says, "this was the one that gave you trouble. Do you know it now?" In a fourth grade, the teacher asks a question that requires careful reading of the child who rushed through the story, and then says, "Do you think it would have helped if you had read more carefully?"

Other types of adjustments will need to be made during classroom activities when it is desirable for children of differing levels of reading ability to work together. In one situation, the teacher may provide materials on several different levels. In another, she may let the good readers help those who are likely to have trouble with hard words. When the only material available is an adopted text that is difficult for part of the class, it may be important to give special help to the group that needs it or to work with children individually. Group activities need to be planned with the problems of each group member in mind.

Opportunities for individualized reading activities are provided. All the child's reading experiences should not be in group activities. Children need to be encouraged, at times, to go ahead at their own levels and to develop their own reading interests and tastes. All recreational reading is not completely individualized, but many teachers have found this to be one important means of stimulating individual interests. Other opportunities are provided through varied assignments as children read for informational purposes. The special

needs and interests of the individual child have a place in the total reading program.

Classroom records are used as guides to individual needs. Keeping the needs of thirty or more individuals in mind calls for the development of effective methods of appraising progress and keeping records. Simple testing devices, check lists of activities, and anecdotal records will all be important. In a busy classroom these will need to be planned so that they are a part of classroom activities, and an aid to enjoying them, not an extra job to be done. In a program where children have a share in planning their activities they also share in the appraisal process. "My trouble is that I repeat all the little words when I read out loud," says one poor reader in a typical fifth grade, "but I'm trying to remember it, and mother is helping me at home." "We put the names of our library books in our special notebooks" says a second. "I'm reading longer books now and more kinds of books." In a first grade, a child boasts, "Today I knew that word without any help at all." The recording and appraisal process in an effective reading program is a joint activity. Teacher and children together evaluate progress and plan next steps.

ALL TEACHING POINTS IN THE SAME DIRECTION

Growth in one type of skill does not hinder growth in another. An effective reading program is a coordinated program. The skills children need to learn are complex, and they interlock in many ways. Teaching needs to be planned so that growth in one area does not impede growth in another. Speed of reading, for example, cannot develop beyond a certain point if a large share of a child's reading activities are oral, or if he is held too closely to detailed reports on everything he reads. Careful reading to work out the analysis of unfamiliar words is difficult under pressure for increased speed. First-grade crutches of vocalizing and pointing can be discarded when there are opportunities to read simple materials silently. Many of the intermediate grade skills of note-taking, outlining, and summarizing can more readily be developed if children work with informational materials where the vocabulary and general writing style are not difficult. Teachers need to plan so as to identify potential conflicts and adjust teaching emphases, types of material, or plans for practice appropriately.

All the child's reading experiences supplement and reinforce each other. The importance of looking at the child's reading experiences

as a whole has been mentioned at several points. Decisions as to the balance of his activities need to be made in the light of all the reading he is doing. As he reads more widely, the problems he faces should play an increasing part in determining the emphases of his reading instruction. The amount of special practice he is given needs to be planned in the light of the opportunities to use the same skills being offered by his classroom reading experiences. The materials he reads for information or for recreation should be selected so that they are appropriate for his general level of reading skill. The activities in an effective reading program are thoughtfully coordinated. Every opportunity needs to be capitalized upon in such a way that the result is a unified series of experiences for the child.

Coordination is planned from grade to grade and from class to class. The coordination of a child's reading activities needs to be planned not only for the class in which he now is, but from grade to grade, and from teacher to teacher, if he is in a school where more than one person works with him during the same year. Every teacher needs to be able to take children where they are and to move on with them to the new experiences of which they are most in need. Skills stressed at one level should be picked up at the next, when their need recurs. If a child works with two or three teachers in special subject fields, each must be prepared to help him deal with the reading problems he faces in her room. This means that the several persons working with a child need to be agreed on how best to give him help. Furthermore, because children will not grow and learn at the same rate, every teacher must be prepared to handle a range of reading problems. There can be no such thing as teaching only a second-grade program, or a fourth-grade program, or even being a specialist in primary techniques or in techniques appropriate for the intermediate grades. Children's reading needs can best be met in a school where all teachers have worked together to develop a common philosophy and common goals and where there has been enough intervisitation and pooling of ideas on how to teach to develop mutual understanding of problems and methods.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING THE READING PROGRAM AS A WHOLE

Is use being made of every situation in which the child reads?

Is the program broad enough to develop all the skills a child will need eventually in his adult reading experiences?

Is there provision for carefully planned practice at points of difficulty?

PART II

LAYING SOUND FOUNDATIONS— PREREADING AND BEGINNING-READING ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER III

WHAT MAKES FOR SUCCESS IN BEGINNING READING?

SOME BEGINNERS

It is the end of the first week of school in a first grade. The teacher still has much to learn about her class, but already she has found out enough about individual children to lay her first plans for the prereading program.

Louis brought his favorite story book to school on the first day. He could not read much of it except the title, but he could tell the general gist of the story from the pictures. When the children were given an opportunity to paint, he was one of the few who could sign his full name to his picture. During the first week he was much interested in the few signs on the bulletin board and was delighted to be able to find his own name above a cloakroom hook and on a helpers' chart.

Betsy had been trying to read independently since shortly after her fifth birthday. Several of the preprimers in the room were already familiar to her. As the teacher wrote the children's names, Betsy stood by and named the letters as they were written. Free activity periods found her examining the books on the library table, smiling at some of the pictures and reading occasional words. She knew some nursery rhymes and quickly learned others that were part of group experiences in the first few days of school. Her great delight was to try to supply the rhyming word before the teacher said it.

Ted cried for the first few mornings when his mother left him at the classroom door. He was not concerned with the pictures and signs around the room. The play corner, the aquarium, and the blocks for construction activities held his attention. When a picture he had drawn was selected by the children to be posted on the bulletin board, he did not particularly care whether it had a caption, although several in the class thought that there should be one. At the end of the first week he had been to examine the books in the library corner only once. Although he joined small

groups listening to stories for a few minutes, he soon wandered off to other activities.

Mary Lou was greatly interested in the easel. When asked to share her pictures with the class, she enumerated the objects she had drawn but seldom told a related story about them. She seemed to follow with interest the stories read to the group and enjoyed looking at the pictures. However, her own comments showed limited ability to make her ideas clear and a very meager vocabulary. At the end of the first week of school she gave no evidence that she had discovered any clues by which she could recognize her own name.

Jack took a lively interest in everything in the classroom. He quickly learned to find his own name although he was apt to mix it with Jim's if the two were used on the same chart. He enjoyed listening to stories, but he occasionally left the group to go on with other concerns. He stopped to see if there was anything new on the bulletin board each morning, but he showed no great desire to know what the few simple notices said, unless an accompanying picture happened to interest him.

These are typical of the children for whom a program in beginning reading must be planned. Even in the first week of school, the need for differentiated instruction is apparent. This first-grade teacher, like others who are responsible for beginning-reading programs, must plan activities that will make for the greatest growth on the part of each child, not only in ability to read but in all other aspects of development. Part of the total program will consist of prereading activities designed to provide the basis for successful and happy experiences when the children begin to read.

The children who have just been described are at different stages in their readiness for definite instruction in reading. Betsy is already beyond beginning-reading activities. Preprimers are an old story to her. Louis is not far behind. Jack is not particularly interested in learning to read, although he has many of the prereading abilities he needs. Ted and Mary Lou have as yet developed few of the skills that will be important when they begin to read. Other children in the group will have other combinations of abilities and experiences and, as the weeks go by, new strengths and new weaknesses will appear. Some of this class are ready now to progress quickly under definite reading instruction. Others will need many weeks of supplementary experiences before they begin to read.

How to work with these varied patterns of abilities, interests, and backgrounds of experience has long been a source of concern to those interested in the teaching of reading. Parents, willing to accept the fact that children differ in every other aspect of development,

sometimes feel that the techniques of teaching reading should achieve, by some magic formula, equal progress for all. Teachers themselves, in spite of their understanding of individual differences, sometimes feel that their professional reputations depend upon the skill with which their children can read at the end of the first grade. Even the children sometimes come to school feeling that, by virtue of being six years old and in the first grade, they will automatically be able to open a book and make sense of its mysterious symbols.

What makes for reading readiness? How can a teacher determine the specific needs of her group? What types of prereading experiences seem most essential for success in beginning reading? The present chapter is concerned with the identification of prereading needs. The types of activities that make for an effective prereading program are discussed in Chapter IV. Chapter V describes the transition from prereading activities to the first experiences of learning to read.

DEFINING READING READINESS

That children differ—in height, weight, color of hair and eyes, intellectual ability, and even in the rate at which they mature, reach adolescence, and stop growing as adults—is as well established as any other single psychological principle.[1] Progress in a skill such as learning to read is no exception. Two major types of studies have provided the research from which present-day concepts of reading readiness have been developed. One type has been concerned with investigating the factors that make for success in beginning reading.[2] The other has focussed on the reasons why children have failed to make satisfactory progress in reading.[3] Many specific questions regarding the capacities and interests of first-grade children, the circumstances that hinder their reading progress, and the types of activities most helpful in assuring their success in learning to read are still to be answered. Nevertheless, out of the accumulated evi-

[1] See, for a recent statement, Willard C. Olson, *Child Development*. Boston D. C. Heath and Company, 1949

[2] As examples, see Millie C. Almy, *Children's Experiences Prior to First Grade and Success in Beginning Reading*. Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 954. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949; Arthur I. Gates, Guy L. Bond, and David H. Russell, *Methods of Determining Reading Readiness*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939

[3] As examples, see: Chester C. Bennett, *An Inquiry into the Genesis of Poor Reading*. Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 755. New York Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938; Helen M. Robinson, *Why Pupils Fail in Reading*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946.

dence have come some clear-cut suggestions of factors to consider in planning for the experiences which lead to a child's first efforts to read independently.

Readiness is an educational concept. The term "readiness," as distinguished from "maturation," typically refers to the time and the way in which certain activities will be taught, not to the inner unfolding of the child's capacities. Jersild [4] has described it as raising questions regarding the appropriateness of what is to be taught in terms of the child's ability to profit from it—his maturity, his background of experiences, and his possession of needed related skills.

Defined in this way, reading readiness refers not only to the beginning stages of learning to read, but to every step in the child's progress from simple reading tasks to those that are more complicated. Harrison [5] was one of the earliest to use the concept of reading readiness in this broad sense, and to attempt to outline, from level to level, the new reading tasks children might be expected to face. Although the term "reading readiness" is often used to refer specifically to those skills needed for success in beginning reading, it is a helpful orientation to the total readiness problem to think of the concept in its larger sense, and to use the term "prereading" for that specific aspect of readiness which has to do with these early primary skills.

The fact that reading readiness is an educational concept has implications for planning a prereading program. It raises questions regarding the skills the child now possesses and what he needs to be taught. The prereading program is not, then, a period of waiting until a certain stage of maturity is reached. Nor does it consist of a special series of activities that must necessarily be undertaken by all children. Rather, it builds the skills important to successful first steps in beginning reading, just as the later first-grade program develops readiness for work with second-grade materials, and experiences with fifth-grade reading problems prepare for the somewhat more complex activities taken on in the sixth.

Basic prereading abilities center around skill with words, stories, and pictures. The skills most directly related to success in first-grade reading call for ability to work with books, stories, pictures, and words. These might be termed basic prereading abilities. These

[4] Arthur T. Jersild *et al., Child Development and the Curriculum*, p. 31. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1946.

[5] M. Lucile Harrison, *Reading Readiness*. Revised Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939.

abilities have been classified in slightly different ways by different authors, but they fall in the general areas of facility in use of oral language, interest in books and stories and awareness of the purposes they serve, ability to make gross discriminations in word forms; sensitivity to rhymes and the sounds of words, and ability to interpret pictures

The most important step in appraising a child s prereading status, then, is to study the degree to which he possesses the skills he will need to use as he begins to read. Tests of ability to work with words, rhymes, and pictures are included in almost all reading readiness tests These skills are also reflected to some extent in a child s general interest in printed matter In her study of first grade children, Almy[6] found that responses to many different types of opportunities to read, from looking at a story book while Mother reads it to trying to read the words on articles around the house, had a positive relationship to success in beginning reading In a comprehensive study of factors that make for reading readiness Gates, Bond, and Russell[7] found that tests asking children to interpret pictures, to match words, to give rhymes, to follow directions, and to follow the plots of stories in much the same way as they would be called upon to do in beginning reading experiences had among the highest correlations with tests of reading achievement given later in the first grade This study also revealed that prereading abilities are, to some extent, specific to the immediate teaching situation Ability to name the letters of the alphabet for example, was found to be related to success in beginning reading in classrooms where children usually came to first grade with this information and teachers were accustomed to making use of it This same ability seemed to be relatively unimportant in other classrooms where it was not typically part of children s experience background and teachers did not customarily depend on it A child s prereading abilities need to be appraised, in part, in terms of his general facility with language books, pictures and word forms and sounds, and in part, in terms of the specific way in which he is going to be taught to read

Experiences planned to develop prereading abilities must provide then, many opportunities to work with words and pictures in varied settings Some of these need to be oral There also need to be contacts with printed words in books and stories, and many casual

[6] Millie C Almy *op cit*
[7] Arthur I Gates Guy L Bond and David H Russell *op cit*

opportunities to respond to names, charts, labels, and special notices. Pictures need to be used—as sources of interest on the bulletin board, as part of the fun of sharing a story, as a record of an interesting excursion. Prereading activities and beginning-reading activities center around many of the same types of experiences.

Experience background is important. At one table may be Sally, whose parents have taken her to the Zoo, to the park, to the lake for picnics, or to spend a weekend on the farm; who owns a bicycle, a doll house, a pet kitten, and a phonograph; and who lives on a street where houses have gardens and boulevards have trees. Next to her may be Jane, who has grown up in an apartment house; who has never had a pet; whose parents rarely have time to take her on trips; and who plays in the narrow apartment court and on the street in front of her home. The influences of breadth of experience background in learning to read are pervasive. A child who has a wide background of experiences has more ideas about which to talk, to write, to read, and to interpret pictures. He also has better background from which to understand preprimer stories. Simply written though these first materials are, they call for a working knowledge of suburban family life; of wagons and tricycles; of friendly postmen and firemen. Moreover, these preprimer experiences are but a small proportion of the total number of stories, books, and pictures to which a first-grader is expected to respond with understanding.

Prereading experiences need to be an integral part of a total primary program planned to develop a rich and varied background of experiences. In one sense, they represent the verbal side of this program—the planning sessions, the sharing periods, the recording of what was seen on a trip, the experience of interpreting pictures, and the labelling of classroom exhibits. These are the contacts with words that meet prereading needs in settings where the importance of being able to read is kept to the fore.

Intellectual maturity plays a part. A number of attempts have been made to determine a mental age before which one should not try to teach a child to read. In one of the most frequently quoted of these, Morphett and Washburne [8] studied the reading achievement of first-grade children in relation to their mental ages. In this study there was a sharp upward rise in achievement for the group from 6–0 to 6–5 mentally, and another sharp rise for the group from 6–6

[8] Mabel V. Morphett, and Carleton Washburne, "When Should Children Begin to Read?" *Elementary School Journal*, 31 (March, 1931), 496–503.

to 6–11 mentally. After this point increases were gradual. This led the authors to propose that beginning-reading instruction be postponed until the child reached a mental age of six years and six months. In this study, however, and in others in which a definite mental age for beginning reading has been proposed, little attention is given to exploring the possibility of varying teaching methods in terms of children's abilities.

Gates,[9] among others, went at the problem by studying adjustments of teaching techniques to varying levels of intellectual ability. In one situation, children above five years mentally made reasonable progress when materials and teaching methods were carefully planned to meet their needs. Other classrooms were reported where higher levels of intellectual ability were needed for successful progress. Studies such as this support the general conclusion that it is impossible to establish any single mental age as a crucial point before which instruction in reading should not be given. The determining factor, within limits, seems to be the way children are taught.

Nevertheless, intellectual ability makes a difference. The fact that there seems to be no specific mental age that can be used as a determining factor in deciding when to start beginning reading activities does not mean that pressure to learn to read can safely be put indiscriminately on all first-graders. Other things being equal, which they seldom are in situations involving human beings, children with high I.Q.'s are more likely to learn rapidly than children with low I.Q.'s. Correlations of scores on intelligence tests with measures of reading progress tend to fall between .45 and .65.[10] Furthermore, certain prereading skills are closely related to general intellectual ability. Tests of vocabulary and of picture interpretation, for example, are included in the *Revised Stanford-Binet Scale* at several levels as part of a composite picture of intellectual maturity.[11] Prereading activities can be used to supply many experiences from which a child can profit in terms of his general level of intellectual maturity. These activities can also, at times, serve to fill in important gaps in a child's preschool background. However, there is little evidence to suggest that such experiences will make marked changes in the rate of a

[9] Arthur I. Gates, "The Necessary Mental Age for Beginning Reading," *Elementary School Journal*, 37 (March, 1937), 497–508.

[10] Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn, *The Psychology of Teaching Reading*, pp. 80–81. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952.

[11] Lewis M. Terman and Maude E. Merrill, *Measuring Intelligence*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937.

child's intellectual growth. This raises the question as to whether time is well spent attempting to force a child to extend himself to the limits of his intellectual ability in a struggle to learn to read when a few months later he may grasp the same concepts with relative ease. It is appropriate to question, also, whether the risk of discouragement and defeat is worth taking. Studies of retarded readers have identified attempts to introduce children to reading too soon as possible causes of later difficulty, and investigations of the permanence of the learning of immature children and of the amount of time needed to teach them suggest that the efforts of both teacher and children might better have been placed elsewhere.[12]

In general, studies of intellectual ability as a factor in reading readiness seem to support the proposal that the prereading program should be a program of active teaching, not a waiting period. They suggest, also, that this teaching needs to be paced to the individual child's capacity for growth. Able children intellectually, if their specific prereading abilities are equally strong, may progress rapidly into beginning-reading activities. On the other hand, the lower the mental age, the longer the prereading period will need to be, the simpler the beginning material will need to be, the greater the amount of repetition in meaningful settings which will be needed, and the more highly individualized the teaching methods will have to be.[13] The simple, interesting, and informal experiences with words and stories provided in prereading activities may meet very well the needs of these children for a simplified and enriched beginning-reading program.

Other aspects of development may make a difference. Evidence as to the influence of physical, social, and emotional factors on success in beginning reading is not clear-cut. Children with defective vision, hearing, and speech have been successful in learning to read. On the other hand, studies have shown that such deficiencies do appear in a certain number of retarded readers.[14] Certainly, for individual children, physical difficulties will be a contributing, if not a deciding, factor in unsuccessful beginning-reading experiences. Focussing the eyes on the printed page is a complex task demanding both a degree of visual maturity, which may not always be achieved at the

[12] Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-69.

[13] Samuel A. Kirk, *Teaching Reading to Slow Learning Children*, p. 83. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940.

[14] Helen M. Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–33, 50–58.

age of six, and specific skill in coordinating the functioning of the two eyes.[15] Not being able to hear, or not being able to pronounce words distinctly may make fine auditory discriminations difficult. Illness may also be a problem. The child who takes a trip to the farm, is out of school with a cold the next day and misses the class discussion and the writing of an experience record, and returns the day following to try to read the record, has missed a vital step in the sequence.

A child's general rate of maturation may also be a factor in his success in beginning reading. Olson[16] reports cases where growth in reading ability seems to parallel the child's over-all pattern of maturation. The question of maturation is also raised frequently in speculations as to why more boys than girls are found in remedial classrooms.[17] Considerable evidence has accumulated to show that girls, on the average, are about a year in advance of boys in general maturation by the age of six. There are, of course, many exceptions. What might this difference in growth rates mean in first-grade classrooms where both sexes are expected to perform the same visual tasks, to have the same span of attention, and to sit without wiggling for the same length of time?

Social and emotional factors may be involved, also, in the cases of individual children. In his study of poor readers, Bennett[18] did not find that, as a group, they were significantly different from good readers in areas of personal and social adjustment. However, a child may be so timid that he finds it hard to work with a reading group, or so anxious to make friends that he devotes his full time in a group to poking, talking, and making other kinds of social contacts, helpful in their own way, but not particularly conducive to learning to read. In slightly over half of the thirty children included in Robinson's[19] intensive case studies of causes of reading failures, maladjusted homes were identified as contributing causes. Even more significant in this study is the evidence that the most severely retarded children

[15] For a detailed discussion of visual readiness for reading see Emmett A. Betts, *Foundations of Reading Instruction*, pp. 172-202. New York: American Book Company, 1946.

[16] Willard C. Olson, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-134.

[17] Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-40.

[18] Chester C. Bennett, *An Inquiry into the Genesis of Poor Reading*, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 755. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938.

[19] Helen M. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

tended to show the largest constellations of possible causative factors. This is another strong argument for considering the total growth of each child in appraising his readiness for beginning reading.

The prereading program, then, should be an integral part, but only one part, of a total primary program planned to contribute to the all-round development of children—physical, intellectual, social, and emotional. At times, meeting a need in one of these developmental areas may be an essential step in clearing the way for successful reading experiences. At other times, emphasis should not be placed upon learning to read, even if it seems likely that the child will be successful, because of a more crucial developmental need. The total growth of the child should come before his growth in any single skill or subject-matter area.

Individual differences in abilities will exist within one child as well as among children. Children do not grow evenly in all aspects of development. Profiles of scores on reading-readiness tests and broader studies of other aspects of growth indicate that each child will have his own particular pattern of strengths and weaknesses. Dale may be much interested in listening to stories but have trouble in identifying his own name. Jennie may respond readily to informal reading experiences but find it hard to work with a group. Some children will be well on the way toward independent reading. Others will have little strength in any area—their language skills will be limited, gross discriminations among words will seem beyond them, and discussion of pictures will call forth only meager comments.

Prereading activities will have to be varied to meet individual needs. It will not be possible to set up an orderly arrangement of three or four prereading groups and to plan a definite series of prereading activities for each group. The pattern will have to be one in which many aspects of the primary program contribute to prereading skills—for individuals, for groups, and for the entire class. Nor will there be a clear-cut transition from prereading to beginning-reading activities. Children may be working with a preprimer in the morning and sharing in the oral side of constructing an experience record in the afternoon; or reading about the experiences of a preprimer family on a picnic, and taking a trip themselves to build better concepts and wider vocabulary. The difference between prereading and beginning reading is one of emphasis and the transition is gradual.

IDENTIFYING PREREADING NEEDS

In planning for prereading experiences, the classroom teacher has to know where each member of her group now stands. Three main sources of help are available in appraising prereading needs. Perhaps most important are the day-by-day appraisals made by the teacher as children go about the normal activities of the first-grade classroom. Reading-readiness tests provide a second type of information. Cumulative records, in which the teacher collects various types of evidence regarding children's growth, are a third source of help.

Appraisals of prereading needs serve several purposes. They are the bases for decisions regarding the types of prereading activities to plan from day to day. For this purpose, the appraisals of growth that are made on a day-by-day basis are particularly useful. Appraisals of prereading abilities also help in making decisions regarding groups of children who may work together with profit. For this purpose, children's scores on readiness tests can be a helpful addition to the teacher's observations from day to day. Appraisals of daily activities, together with more general evidence from readiness tests, also help to identify children who seem ready to move with success into more definitely planned beginning-reading activities. At this point, the accumulated information about each child provides the basis for deciding which ones seem likely to work well together as a beginning-reading group.

In order to decide what prereading experiences are needed or when to have children start work with beginning-reading materials, a teacher has to have a clear idea of the types of growth that are desirable. This means knowing, in general terms, how the beginning reader is likely to be called upon to use the various prereading abilities identified earlier in this chapter. It means, also, analyzing the beginning-reading demands of the particular classroom. There can be considerable variation in points of emphasis among teachers, all of whom are successful in giving beginners a good start in learning to read. A child is ready for beginning-reading activities when he has the skills he needs to be successful in his particular situation.

Once a teacher has determined the kinds of growth she is trying to achieve, it is possible to study children's present status and to make plans for next steps. "Jane and the group who worked with her today could identify almost every line in the experience record without help. They should not have any trouble with a preprimer." "Tom

scarcely gives anyone else in the group a chance. He will have trouble in a reading group until he becomes better able to work with other children." "It is amazing how many gaps in experience the discussion of yesterday's excursion revealed. These children are going to need many more such concrete contacts with the world around them."

Appraising Prereading Abilities in the Classroom Setting

How effectively does the child express himself orally? Since reading is a problem of getting meaning from language in printed form, a child whose oral expression is poor may be handicapped in many ways. He needs to be able to express himself with relative ease, and he needs to be able to understand others. As soon as he starts to read, he is going to have to follow the thread of preprimer stories. These stories may be only one or two lines long at first, but they soon lengthen to several paragraphs and then to several pages. The reader must be able to follow the thought from line to line, to identify the speakers in a conversational passage, and to grasp the sequence of events.

Getting the sense of a story is not the only way in which facility in the use of oral language makes a difference in successful beginning-reading experiences. In typical teaching procedure, discussion is used to enrich a story. The child may be called upon to tell what he has read, to guess what will happen next, or to tell if anything similar ever happened to him. Then, too, many teachers use experience records, composed by the children, as another source of beginning-reading activities. Here the discussion of what happened and how it might be written, of new words learned and new places seen, contributes much to the understanding of the record and to remembering its phrasing when the group rereads. In all these activities the child who cannot make himself clear or who has trouble following what is being said by others is likely to be at a disadvantage.

In addition to being able to express himself clearly, the child needs a good stock of word meanings. As he begins to read, many of his first stories will be about homes, school, stores, trips actually taken by the class, and other familiar topics. Even so, unfamiliar concepts may be used. To the child on a farm, stories and pictures about a trip to the Zoo or a train ride may be unfamiliar. To the underprivileged child, the homes, toys, and gardens of preprimer children may be strange. All children come to school with concepts limited by their own backgrounds. *Dog* may still mean the white woolly pet

that is the special companion of one child. *Home,* for another, may mean the tenth story of an apartment house reached by an elevator, not the pleasant bungalow portrayed in most preprimers. *School* may be a one-room rural schoolhouse or a large building of the metropolis. As a child begins to read, he must be able to reinterpret his concepts in the light of the special way in which the author of his book is using the terms.

Facility in the use of oral language develops slowly. Little children tend to speak in simple assertive sentences, to ramble somewhat in long sentences connected with *and,* and to have ideas that are more complex than they can express. Their vocabulary is still increasing rapidly.[20] Helping children become more effective in language usage is one of the major objectives of the total primary program. Upon a child's growing ability to make himself understood rest not only his progress in reading but a number of his social relationships and his success in many other enterprises.

Beginning-reading experiences will not necessarily be postponed for children who have limited facility in the use of language, since the reading situation itself offers many opportunities for growth. However, the teacher must be prepared to work slowly, using many means of enriching their stocks of word meanings, and giving them many opportunities to learn to express themselves.

A typical primary classroom offers a wealth of opportunities to appraise children's facility in the use of language. The following suggest types of questions that may be raised. This list, and those given in subsequent sections, are intended to help in developing sensitivity in observing children in the classroom setting. No one, of course, would need or expect to collect evidence for all children on all the questions suggested.

How well does the child take part in class discussion? If he is given the opportunity to describe an exciting experience to the group, can he make himself clear? Is he able to relate events in a sequence roughly approaching the way they actually happened? If the children are trying to write a group report of an experience, what kinds of contributions does he make? Is he critical of the phrasing proposed by other children? In class planning sessions do his comments give evidence that he has been able to follow the discussion?

How does he respond to stories? When a story is being read to the

[20] Dorothea McCarthy, "Language Development in Children," *Manual of Child Psychology,* pp. 476–581. Edited by Leonard Carmichael New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1946.

class, does he listen or does he become unduly restless? When others comment upon the story and talk about what is likely to happen next, do his remarks give evidence that he has followed the story with comprehension? Can he identify parts of the story he thought were amusing or exciting? As he looks at the pictures accompanying a story, does he relate the picture to the story?

How well does he follow directions? When he is asked to put materials away, or to put papers on the teacher's desk, are they put where they should be? When plans are made for mid-morning lunch, dismissal, or some other routine activity, does he follow with reasonable understanding? How well does he follow the directions for a game, or for a new activity?

How clearly does he express his needs? Can he ask for materials or assistance in such a way that others can tell what it is he wants? When playing with other children, can he make his suggestions clear? In planning sessions, can he tell what part of the activity he would like to share?

How effective is his stock of word meanings? Does he know the names of common objects around the room? Can he identify some of the less common objects that other children bring to share with their classmates? Does he choose words accurately when trying to express his ideas? Does he show an interest in new words? How well does he describe a picture?

Is the child interested in books and reading? Two little girls were in a classroom in which a substitute teacher spent the morning. To be able to call the children by name, she used the name cards made by their regular teacher, holding each one up, calling the name, and then pinning the card on the child who answered. Within a few minutes one of the little girls was at her side with a piece of paper, saying, "You must pin your name on so we'll know who you are." In a minute the same child was back with another piece of paper asking, "Would you write your name here for me to take home? My mother would like to know who you are, too." In contrast, the second child went home to report on how good the new teacher was, "because she knew all our names all morning and she only had to ask us once." Which child was ready to read?

Learning to read is a matter of getting meaning from the printed page. From the beginning, teachers count on the child's interest in finding out what the story will say, in discovering what a new message on the bulletin board is about, or in reading the caption under his own or someone else's picture. Then, too, the amount of additional practice that he secures depends largely upon whether he will seek opportunities to read in addition to those he is given as a group member.

It is not always easy to understand why a child shows little interest in reading a colorful book or is unaware of the fact that the words he sees all around him serve a purpose, but such youngsters do come to first grades and kindergartens. Some have had little acquaintance with books at home. Parents may have been too busy to spend time reading stories aloud. Then, too, the surrounding environment that is simple to an adult is complex to a child. He is becoming acquainted with large objects such as busses, fire trucks, tractors, construction equipment, people, and animals. In the classroom he is surrounded with new kinds of play equipment, new types of furniture, and a much larger group of children than he is likely to have worked or played with before. Among these many new sources of interest, the printed words on street signs, book covers, chalkboards, and bulletin boards may not assume the significance that they have for the adult who can read. Furthermore, the child's interest in words may not have been encouraged by the adults around him. It takes both experience and maturity before these symbols begin to stand out.

In the group of children who are not interested in reading there must also be classified a small number who have had stories read to them for much of their lives, but who have no particular desire to read for themselves. Other opportunities in the first grade classroom may seem much more exciting than the reading group. The aquarium, the objects brought in by other children to be put in a class museum, or the play corner may be sources of new learnings more stimulating for the moment than books. Such children are aware of the purposes which printed words can serve, but they are content to let adults do the reading for them.

There is little justification for delaying beginning reading activities on the basis of lack of interest alone, since interest can be developed through satisfying contacts with books and stories. However, prereading and beginning-reading experiences will need to be planned to supply many contacts with interesting stories, meaningful notices, and classroom records This is important, not only for the children who need to learn that reading is a useful and interesting activity, but for the entire class.

A teacher may distinguish the child who is eager for more reading experiences from the one for whom reading as yet does not have much meaning by watching for evidence in areas such as the following:

Does the child seek out the library table? Can he pick out the book that is his favorite when the teacher offers to read a story? Does he spend time looking over pictures in the books on the library table? Does he ever suggest turning to a book for information?

Does he bring his favorite books from home to share with the group? Can he tell something about the stories in them? Does he discuss the pictures in them in such a way as to indicate some comprehension of the story? Does he give evidence that parents read stories to him?

Does he enjoy hearing stories read to him? Does he show an interest in a story hour, or in proposing a story he wants to hear? Does he show interest in the pictures in the book being read? Can he discuss the story or tell what happened in a story continued from the day before?

Is he aware of the signs and other informal bits of reading matter that surround him in the classroom? Does he try to find his own name? If a class record has been made of some interesting activity, does he turn to it for information, or point it out to his mother, or to an older child who visits the classroom? If captions have been added to some of the pictures, does he try to find out what they say? If a special note is posted on the bulletin board, does he show interest in what it says? If an object is brought to school with an advertisement or other writing upon it, does he show any curiosity about it?

Is he aware of reading opportunities in his out-of-class environment? As he goes through the halls, does he try to read the various notices? As he goes on excursions to neighboring points of interest, does he try to read the various signs that he encounters—the highway signs, the names of streets, the names of stores, the signs indicating bus stops?

Can the child make gross discriminations among word forms? As soon as a child begins to test his ability to read for himself the stories in his preprimer or the lines of an experience record, he is going to need some techniques for telling words apart. Ability to make gross discriminations among words is all that is needed in the beginning. Materials for the beginning reader are written to avoid using words that demand many fine discriminations. The teacher's first concern, as a child starts to read, is to help him become familiar with the general configurations of enough words to begin to read two or three lines of a story or a classroom record for himself. Skill in word analysis is developed after the child has a stock of familiar words that he can use for the purposes of identifying similar sound elements or word-parts.

Some children will come to school skilled in the general techniques of word recognition. They will already know a number of words. New words will interest them and they will try to read them and pursue the teacher with requests for help. These are the young-

sters for whom success in beginning reading can be predicted with reasonable assurance. Others will not have acquired the capacity to make needed discriminations among words. Some will respond to the general length of the word, but will see no difference between two words of approximately the same length. Some will see the general configuration of the word, but will reply with complete assurance that words like *color* and *mother* look just alike. Some will have no apparent bases for judgment.

Children whose ability to make gross discriminations among word forms is limited need numerous prereading contacts with words in different settings. It is difficult to predict how many such experiences will be needed. The ability to discriminate among word forms is partly a matter of maturity. The child who is intellectually less mature may take longer to learn how to make such distinctions. Visual acuity may make a difference. Lack of experience with words may be another factor. The teacher must be prepared to extend informal experiences with words until the child reaches the point where his discriminations among words suggest that he can profit from more definite beginning-reading instruction.

Among the evidences of growth that may be of help in appraising a child's ability to make gross discriminations among words are the following:

Can the child recognize his own name? Does he know it when it is written alone to mark some of his possessions? Can he pick it out when it is on a list of helpers for the day, or in some other place where similar names are likely to confuse?

Can he recognize signs that are being used regularly? Does he try to read notices on the bulletin board? Does he try to read the key words on a helpers' chart? Can he recognize other special charts—the weather, the news bulletins, the list of birthdays?

As the teacher writes charts or notices for the group, is he interested in the shapes of the words? Is he ever heard to remark on the lengths of words? Does he ever identify words that begin like his name, or look like some other word he knows? Does he ever point out words that begin or end alike?

Does he ever respond to key letters in words? Does he identify other words that start like his name? Does he show interest in initialled handkerchiefs or other objects where single letters are used? Does he show that he knows how the letters he uses to initial his work are related to his name? When looking at alphabet books, does he make comments such as "and my name begins with *B*, too, doesn't it?"

Does he recognize when the same word is used more than once? If a

series of sentences in a class record all begin with the same words, does he note the similarities from line to line? If a word is repeated two or three times in one sentence, does he recognize this? If a word with unusual configuration is used in several places in the room, does he notice it, or can he find it when he is asked about it? If a word is used which was prominent in the title of one of his favorite picture books, does he remember it?

Does the child show an interest in differences in the sounds of words? Reading is not a visual task alone. A child soon comes to the place where the ability to hear likenesses and differences among words becomes important. A teacher can help him develop a valuable aid to word recognition if she can say, "Yes, *Sally* and *Billy* sound the same. Can you hear the part that is the same? Let's write them on the board and see if you can find the part that makes them sound alike.", or "No, this one is *rides*. Let's put them both on the board and see if you can tell what makes it sound differently." To be able to hear that a word is long as well as to see its length, to be able to hear how words rhyme as well as to see that they look somewhat alike, or to hear the same word beginning three sentences in a story as well as to see it are skills that send a child well along the road to independent reading.

Unless the procedures used in beginning-reading activities rely heavily on a phonetic approach to words, children are not so likely to be handicapped in the very early stages of beginning reading if they lack skill in discriminating among the sounds of words as they are if they lack ability to make gross discriminations among the configurations of words. However, it is not long before weakness in ability to identify similarities and differences among sounds will make itself felt. Some of the necessary skill can be built through discussion of new words as reading activities proceed. Prereading experiences with rhymes, with words which begin with the same sound, and with words with interesting sounds can also help.

Ability to respond to the sounds of words may be appraised by asking questions such as the following:

How does the child respond to rhymes? Does he seem to enjoy the rhythm and rhyme of finger plays, poems, and rhyming games? If the teacher leaves a line unfinished, can he finish it? If she asks for several words which rhyme, can he name them? If words that rhyme appear in a class experience record, does he point them out?

Is he alert to similar sounds in words used in regular classroom activities? If his name sounds like that of another child, does he ever point it

out? Does he ever make up rhymes about his name, or about the names of his friends? If two words begin the same way, does he comment on their sound as well as upon the way they look?

Does he show an interest in odd and unusual word sounds? If nonsense words appear in his story, or if characters are given peculiar names, does he enjoy the sounds? Is he ever heard laughing about words with unusual sounds? Does he ever remark about very long words, or exceedingly short words, or say them aloud to hear how they sound?

Does the child interpret pictures effectively? Anyone who has examined the preprimers, primers, and first readers with which most children begin their reading experiences knows how important a part the picture plays in the story. Often the title page suggests the contents almost entirely through a picture. In simpler materials the picture typically occupies one half to three quarters of the page. In the beginning, the story on a given page is usually about the picture. Occasionally, in a very easy preprimer page, the words of the story convey little meaning without the picture. The child who is adept in interpreting pictures brings to his first reading experiences a technique that suggests to him approximately what the story will say.

A picture is also important as an aid in identifying new words. If a story is illustrated with a picture of two children looking out of the windows of a plane, it is not very difficult for a child to deduce that the new word on the page is likely to be *airplane*, or perhaps *fly*. Having made this deduction, he inserts the correct word without much trouble in a sentence such as *The children are in an* – ——— *They like to* ——— would be equally plain.

The child will draw upon his skill in picture interpretation as he responds to various devices used by the teacher to help him remember new words. Often they are presented with matching pictures. Words may be re used around the classroom under pictures that illustrate them. Picture dictionaries are sometimes developed. Action words such as *run, jump, skip* are sometimes made more vivid by presenting them with the picture showing the appropriate action.

Growth in picture interpretation appears to be a combination of maturation and experience. It is typical for the young child to pass through a stage where he enumerates objects in a picture before he begins to tell a story about it, and to tell a story about each of the characters separately before he weaves the total picture into one related tale. In the *Revised Stanford-Binet Scale,* Form L, picture interpretation appears among the test items as early as three years, six months and as late as twelve years. At the younger age, enumera-

tion of three objects is sufficient to secure credit. However, Terman reports that children as young as three and four years gave interpretations of some of the pictures used in preliminary experimentations.[21] To be able to interpret a picture that relates to a situation within his experience, then, is a task that a six- or seven-year-old may reasonably be expected to perform. Children who have not acquired this ability need many interesting and realistic situations in which they can learn.

The typical activities of a kindergarten or first-grade classroom give many opportunities to judge a child's ability to interpret pictures. Children are drawing pictures themselves. They are also surrounded by many books with pictures, and by bulletin-board displays.

What does the child say about his own pictures and those drawn by his friends? If he is drawing an illustration for a group experience record, can he identify what he is trying to draw? Does he usually tell a story about his pictures, or does he point to objects? What does he say about other children's pictures?

How does he respond to pictures in classroom books? Can he identify the characters about whom he has been hearing? Can he tell which part of the story the picture illustrates? Does he comment upon interesting elements in the picture that throw light upon the story? Does he respond to the humor in a picture? Does he voluntarily spend time at the library table looking at pictures?

How does he respond to new pictures on the bulletin board? Can he tell what the picture is about? Does he make a story from the picture, or does he point to separate objects? Does he relate the picture to comparable experiences of his own? Does he ask questions that indicate that he has identified elements that are new and interesting to him?

Does he use pictures for information? Can he find an answer to his questions in an appropriate picture? Does he raise new questions as a result of studying a picture? Can he identify contrasts between a picture and his own experience?

Does the child know how to handle books? The beginning reader must know enough about handling books to be able to start at the front, turn the pages in order, read from left to right, follow the lines from top to bottom of a page, and identify the beginning of a new story by its title page. He also needs to know how to care for books properly. Of all the prereading abilities, these are the most easy to develop as children actually start their beginning-reading activities.

[21] Lewis M. Terman and Maude E. Merrill, *Measuring Intelligence*, pp. 204, 267–8. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937.

It does not take much time to help the child who is interested in reading a story to learn to identify the front of the book. Titles of stories are usually in large print, set out by themselves, and not difficult to find. Learning to begin at the left side of a line may prove somewhat more complicated, since, for many children, reading is the first experience in which there has been any real need to look at a special part of an object first.

Even though many of the skills related to handling books are developed rather readily as children begin to read, prereading experiences can help to smooth the way. Adequate left-to-right orientation is the technique most likely to take time to develop. Many first-graders will continue to have some difficulty as they begin to write, and as they try to read words that offer few configurational clues, such as *was* and *saw*, *on* and *no*, or *stop* and *spot*. Children who seem to be particularly confused in directional orientation will merit considerable help at the prereading level.

Teachers can look for evidences of skill in handling books such as the following:

How does the child handle the books on the library table? Can he find the name of the book on the cover? Can he open to the first page of a story he would like to hear? Can he point to the place in the page where the story begins? When he examines the book, does he turn the pages in an orderly sequence? How careful is he with books?

How good is his sense of directional orientation in classroom written activities? As the teacher writes a sentence on the board, can he tell at which side she should begin? If a caption is to be put under his picture, can he tell at which side it should start? If he writes his own initials on a piece of work, does he write them from left to right? As he copies letters, how many does he reverse? Can he point to the beginning of a line in an experience record, or to the place to start reading in a story in a book?

Can he identify the parts of a classroom experience record? Can he point to the title of the chart? Does he know where the first line begins? In helping to read the chart, does he take the lines in order?

Using Reading-Readiness Tests

Choose the test to meet the needs of a particular situation. Many school systems use reading readiness tests as another means of appraising prereading ability. These instruments measure many of the same abilities that the teacher appraises in the regular classroom setting. They are not essential to an effective prereading program, but they can be of definite value. Since the norms of reading-readiness

tests are developed on a national basis, they provide objective evidence against which a teacher can check her judgment. Sometimes they may help to temper appraisals colored by the population of a particular school or by the behavior of an individual child.

Reading-readiness tests, as well as standardized tests used at other points in the school program, should serve primarily to help the classroom teacher work more effectively with her children. The type of test, the filing of the test booklets, and the time at which the test is given should all be planned with the needs of the teacher in mind.

Three main types of readiness tests are available. The first, of which the *Metropolitan Readiness Tests* [22] is one of the most widely known, is a test of educational readiness that explores broadly the skills needed for first-grade activities. In this test, certain of the subtests measure specific prereading abilities—recognizing similarities and differences in words and pictures, choosing pictures that correspond to key words and sentences. Other subtests appraise general experience background, knowledge of numbers, and skill in copying numbers and figures. This type of readiness test is particularly valuable when the information needed is a general estimate of children's potential adjustment to typical first-grade work. Given late in the kindergarten or early in the first grade, it can be used as one guide in setting up groups of about the same ability level. Study of the subtest scores can help to diagnose particular strengths and weaknesses.

A second type of readiness test measures prereading skills specifically. These tests measure such abilities as interpreting pictures, recognizing similar configurations of words, identifying similar sounds, giving rhymes, recognizing the meaning of words, and following oral directions. Tests calling for knowledge of the names of letters and of numbers are sometimes included. Typically the child does little reading. He may be called upon to identify the two words that are alike in a set of four, or to find the word he has just been shown on a flash card. Ability to give rhymes is often measured by using pictures. Ability to understand oral language may be tested by asking the child to follow increasingly complicated directions. The *Gates Reading Readiness Tests* [23] and the *Lee-Clark Reading Readi-*

[22] Gertrude H. Hildreth and Nellie L. Griffiths, *Metropolitan Readiness Tests.* Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, 1949, 1950.

[23] Arthur I. Gates, *Gates Reading Readiness Tests.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939.

ness Test [24] are typical of such tests. Tests of this sort are particularly helpful when the teacher is interested in specific knowledge regarding children's prereading skills. Profiles indicating the strengths and weaknesses of each child can be drawn, and prereading activities planned accordingly.

Reading readiness tests are also provided along with other prereading materials in many of the present-day series of basal readers. These tests are designed to measure specifically the child's ability to progress into the beginning reading materials of the given series. They are often developed around the same types of exercises as those included in the workbooks of the particular series Frequently they test the child's ability to recognize the words that will be part of his next reading experiences. Such tests have special value for the teacher who is working with an adopted series, and who wants a guide as to whether her children are ready for more advanced work

Other minor considerations need to be taken into account in choosing a readiness test One is the question of how easy it is to administer First graders are not very skilled in following directions and are normally most cooperative in trying to help each other It is usually wise to test them in small groups The less the amount of help available to the teacher in giving the test, the more important it is to have one that is easy to administer, with directions that are very clear for the children Time is also a factor Tests that have to be given to children individually may provide valuable information, but be difficult to use under typical teaching conditions From the teacher's point of view, how time consuming it will be to score the test should also be considered It is often helpful to examine several tests and manuals before deciding on a test for a particular class.

Give the test at a time that will provide the most help in planning prereading experiences. A readiness test is most useful when it serves as a diagnostic device to provide help in planning children's experiences It does not, necessarily, as the name seems to imply, separate the children who are ready to read from those who are not, nor does it give a specific standard which all children must be able to meet in order to be successful in beginning-reading activities. In most cases the test norms are given as percentile scores These indicate the child's status in relation to other children of his age, for the test as a whole and for each of the subtests Usually the test manual

[24] J Murray Lee and Willis W. Clark, *Lee Clark Reading Readiness Test* Revised Edition. Los Angeles California Test Bureau, 1943.

also indicates ways of predicting potential success in beginning reading on the basis of the test scores. Such evidence is most useful early in first grade as one aid in planning for the year's work.

In some school systems, a readiness test is given in kindergarten. These scores are not likely to be as accurate for the first-grade teacher as those from a test given in the fall. They have the virtue, however, of being available for many of the children when school starts. In school systems where there is pressure to begin some definite reading activities early in the fall, test scores from the preceding spring are a convenient aid for a tentative first grouping of children.

Tests given early in the first grade are likely to give a somewhat clearer picture of children's present status. Time must be allowed, however, for the children to become accustomed to school routines, and skilled in following directions and using pencils and crayons. Otherwise the scores of some youngsters may be invalidated by general lack of orientation to school. Usually a test can be given safely after two to three weeks have elapsed.

Tests developed specifically around the materials in a basal-reading series are typically planned for a special point in a set of prereading work-type activities proposed by the authors of the series. They are usually most helpful if they are given at the place in the sequence of reading experiences where they are intended. Used in this way they help to identify the children for whom the next materials are likely to be suitable, and those who apparently need a longer time with simpler activities.

In some school systems it may seem desirable to test all first grades at about the same time, in order to have comparable scores from class to class. However, there are also advantages in giving teachers freedom to decide when and how they will use readiness tests. At their best, these instruments serve primarily to provide another piece of evidence regarding children's growth. Teachers may differ in the times at which they feel this evidence is most helpful.

Look at profiles as well as at total scores. Since the purpose of a readiness test is to help in planning prereading activities, it is important to look at the child's score on each of the subtests. It is sometimes helpful, also, to examine the test booklet itself for clues as to the way the child worked. Steve, for example, may have high subtest scores in every area. If his classroom performance corroborates the test scores, he should be successful in beginning-reading activities. Jay may have great strength in rhyming and in picture interpretation,

but have done practically nothing on the subtests calling for identifying words with similar configurations. He may need many more contacts with words before he will be successful in working with a preprimer. The manuals accompanying reading-readiness tests often provide helpful case studies as aids in interpreting individual patterns. Test manuals may also suggest appropriate prereading activities. The value of a test is increased when the teacher uses all such aids in understanding the performance of an individual child.

Keeping Objective Records of Classroom Observations

Make anecdotal records. Readiness test scores show the child at only one point in his progress toward beginning-reading activities, and at work with only one type of material. These scores need to be supplemented by objective evidence of the child's performance in daily classroom activities. Some of this evidence can be collected by means of anecdotal records. An anecdotal record is a brief description of a significant aspect of a child's behavior. Teachers often collect such records by carrying with them a pad of paper upon which brief notes can be made as an incident worthy of special mention occurs. These notes are dated and dropped into the children's cumulative record folders at the end of the day. From time to time the evidence in the folder is checked, and a brief summary statement of the child's progress is written on a special page provided for such purposes. Anecdotal records can serve many purposes. Some of their most helpful contributions are made in the areas of social and emotional adjustment where test records are almost impossible to secure. For the purposes of planning prereading activities, certain of these records should bear on the child's growing skill with words, stories, and pictures.

It is not necessary to collect daily information about every aspect of growth for every child in order to have helpful anecdotal records. Indeed, such a task would be impossible. What is needed is significant evidence of progress or difficulties. The process is simplified, once it is begun, because pertinent facts about Jerry or Mary Lou begin to stand out. "Today Jerry found his name on the helpers' chart without being told. This is the first evidence that he is beginning to make a few discriminations among the shapes of words." "Mary Lou had a story to tell about her picture today. This is the first time." Observations of such key pieces of evidence may result in only three or four anecdotes in any one day.

The task of collecting anecdotal records can be simplified, also, by identifying some of the classroom situations in which the evidence is likely to stand out most clearly. Certain aspects of the daily program are conducive to freedom of oral expression—perhaps a sharing period, an evaluation session, or an independent work period when the teacher can talk to individual children. Story hours may provide opportunity to appraise ability to follow the gist of a story and skill in interpreting pictures. Work with experience records calls for responses to the shapes and sounds of words. No two classrooms will be exactly alike in the situations in which it is most easy to observe growth in prereading abilities. Each teacher needs to make an analysis of her own program.

In collecting anecdotal records, it is often helpful to watch for one thing at a time. When the children are examining a set of pictures after a trip to the railroad station, the teacher may concentrate on the quality of the picture interpretation. If they are meeting in an informal group to share creative stories, it may help to look especially at the evidences of story sense. As they lay plans for independent activities, it is possible to watch for the children who are able to carry out the plans and for those who need help. Such systematic observation can do much to facilitate the acquiring of useful anecdotal records without making the process a burden. The accumulating evidence not only provides an objective basis for planning new activities and for talking with parents, but it also serves to keep the teacher alert to the signs of progress or difficulty in her class.

Use informal test situations. Another method of securing an objective record of day-by-day growth is to set up an occasional informal testing situation. Children do not necessarily need to work with pencil and paper for this purpose. The teacher may plan an interesting activity where one particular skill predominates, and then work with a small group so that it is easy to note individual responses. Work with an experience record can be made the center of several types of informal tests. When a teacher wishes to appraise the ability of the group in identifying similarities in word forms, she can write words or phrases on flash cards and note which children can match the cards with the same words and phrases in the experience record. It is also possible to ask children to see how many places in a record they can find the same word or phrase. To tell how many children are beginning to read independently, note can be made of those who

can read given lines without help. Games in which children try to supply rhyming words can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in working with the sounds of words. An interesting picture book can be used to determine differences in picture interpretation. Brief notes can be made about the performances of individual children in such specially-planned activities and added to their cumulative records. Some teachers find it helpful and a saving of time to keep a chart on which children's names are listed across the top and significant areas of growth down one side.

In many classrooms, teachers will also be using a certain number of commercially-prepared or teacher-constructed work-type activities as part of children's prereading experiences. Performance on these materials can be appraised and typical samples of the child's work added to his cumulative file. Sometimes it is possible to select activities from several points in a prereading workbook so that the child works with exercises ranging from easy to difficult. Such exercises provide, on an informal basis, information similar to that secured from a readiness test.

Make effective use of records of classroom activities. In the normal course of the day, teachers make records of classroom activities which, if saved and analyzed, can add to the growing amount of information about a particular child. If the helpers' charts for a month are studied, for example, the types of responsibilities taken on by each child are easy to see. In planning for independent work experiences, teachers often jot down the names of the children who are to work at the clay table, who are going to paint, or who are to be in the play corner. An analysis of these records over several weeks helps to indicate whether children are seeking one type of activity or getting a variety of experiences. Listing the names of those who helped to compose an experience chart can provide a record of the children who took part in each such activity. Checking off, at the end of each day, the names of the children who worked at the library table can give a picture of those who are most interested in books. Adding the child's name to the object he brought to the museum corner, or to the picture he brought for the bulletin board, provides a simple way of telling which children are contributing the most frequently. A record can be kept of some of the activities engaged in by an individual child by filing samples of his work—a picture he has drawn, a story he has dictated, or some of his written work.

Part of the secret of making effective appraisals of children's

growth through day-by-day classroom experiences is to plan simple recording systems that serve the on-going activities of the group while they provide the teacher with a way of taking a more careful look at what is happening to individuals. Good records should not be a burden. They should be of use while they are being collected.

Study kindergarten records. Many children will come to first grade after a year in kindergarten. While the experiences provided for five-year-olds do not stress the contacts with printed materials and the amount of encouragement to explore the similarities and differences among the configurations of words that will be provided in first grade, the kindergarten program in many ways provides excellent prereading experiences. Teachers of five-year-olds are concerned with the same aspects of physical and social development that concern teachers of first-graders. Many activities are planned in kindergarten to encourage facility with language; many books are read and stories told to the children; many pictures are used. Because of the factors of general maturity that have been discussed earlier, a year in kindergarten will not guarantee success in learning to read, nor is the child whose home has supplied broad prereading experiences necessarily handicapped in learning to read because he has not been to kindergarten. It is helpful, however, in appraising reading readiness, for the first-grade teacher to know what kinds of experiences a child has had in kindergarten. Similarly, it is helpful to kindergarten teachers in planning their programs to know the types of activities in which children will be expected to engage in first grade. If kindergarten records are available, they should be studied with care in planning prereading activities in the first grade.

APPRAISING RELATED ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

It is as important to study related aspects of a first-grade child's development as it is to appraise his growth in those skills and attitudes directly related to working with books and stories. This needs to include a look at his general experience background, appraisal of his physical and intellectual growth, and study of the social and emotional adjustments he is making in the classroom setting. Cumulative records need to include evidence regarding these related areas of growth. Some of this will be supplied by the school nurse or physician. Some will come from anecdotal records collected in a fashion similar to that just described. Some will be collected through visiting homes and talking with parents.

What experience background does the child bring to his reading? Ways in which a beginning reader draws upon his background of experiences have already been described briefly. It contributes to his vocabulary and deepens his concepts. It is the basis from which he understands a story and interprets its pictures. It provides the impetus for oral-language experiences as he makes his suggestions for class plans, helps to dictate an experience record, or tells the group about something special he has done at home.

Experiences prior to first grade also influence the ease with which the child fits into the classroom. There will be differences in familiarity with such classroom equipment as paint brushes, crayons, scissors, construction blocks, and toys. Children will come to school with varied experiences in working and playing with other children. Ability to work with materials with reasonable independence and ability to get along well with other children without supervision both become important to the smooth functioning of the classroom when the teacher begins to work with reading groups for part of the day.

Activities that contribute to a broader experience background are important at all grade levels. For every first-grader there needs to be an environment where there are many new things to see, to handle, to talk about, and eventually to read about. For children whose background is limited, it may be important to supply more than the usual amount of concrete experience. Possibly for some weeks there will be few intensive prereading activities with words and stories while these children are encouraged to investigate their classroom environment, helped to learn to use various items of classroom equipment, given opportunities to work and play together, and taken on a variety of excursions to other parts of the school and to places of interest in the neighborhood.

The teacher can study the background of experiences with which children come to school by observing them in many different situations:

What home activities does the child report? When he comes back to school after the weekend, what does he say he has been doing? What does he bring to school to share with other children? Does he draw on home and community experiences in classroom discussions and interpreting pictures? Does he mention experiences of his own which parallel those of children in stories he hears, or those reported by other children?

What evidence of his background is revealed in his school activities? Does he mention that he has been on trips or has seen objects similar to

those in pictures posted on the bulletin board? In a class discussion, does he draw on his outside experience? What do his pictures and creative stories reveal of his background? What can be learned about him from his dramatic play? What does he talk about when two or three children work or play together?

How much at home does he seem in the classroom? How well does he handle equipment? What kinds of equipment seem strange to him? How does he get along with other children? Does it seem easy for him to find his way around the school? Is he able to get out his own materials, put on his own coat or rubbers?

Are there physical factors that might impede reading progress? Evidence regarding a child's vision, hearing, and general health needs to be secured from a medical authority. At times this will be the school nurse, at times a family physician, and at times a specialist to whom the child has been referred. Certain tests of vision and various types of audiometers are available as a help in the screening process at school. However, care needs to be taken to avoid giving diagnoses on the bases of such tests. The responsibility of school personnel is to be alert to potential difficulties and to urge that further checks be made by specialists. Identification of speech difficulties is likely to be done by the classroom teacher unless there is a speech therapist in a school system. Here, too, medical authorities can help in locating actual physical malformations that may be causing the trouble.

Adjustments of the prereading and beginning-reading programs for children with physical handicaps will depend upon the advice of the specialist who has been consulted. Sometimes it may mean an extension of prereading experiences, in which pressures for day-by-day work with books and other materials that must be seen near at hand are not so exacting. At other times there may need to be adjustments of the materials and experiences of the beginning-reading period. A child with a visual handicap may be seated with special attention to light and to the size of print he uses, be taught with special care how to hold his book. A child who has trouble hearing may be seated close to the teacher and addressed directly. Special help may be given to correct speech difficulties and special care taken to provide supplementary activities for the child who has been absent because of illness.

Because of their daily contacts with children, teachers are in a unique position to identify health problems and to urge that a child be referred for further checks. It is important to be alert to the

evidences of difficulty. These are often best caught during informal activities when there are opportunities to observe individuals or small groups—talking to children before school begins; working with individuals during an independent work period; or working with a small group for reading, language, or number experiences. It is particularly important to realize that a child often learns to conceal the fact that he does not quite know what is going on. He guesses; he clowns; he drops his book, talks to another child, or in some other way avoids the issue. The causes of undue amounts of such behavior need to be looked into with care.

Evidence such as the following may suggest the need for further checks by specialists:

Does the child show evidences of visual difficulties? Does he rub his eyes? Does he seem to shade his eyes from light? Are his eyes red, or watery? Are his eyelids granulated? Does he squint or turn his head at a peculiar angle? Does he seem to identify words at one distance, but have trouble with them at another? Does he complain of headaches, or say that his eyes hurt?

Is there evidence that he might not hear clearly? Does he appear to be listless, or daydream unless spoken to directly? Does he have a habit of turning his head to one side, listening with his mouth open, or cupping a hand over his ear when he is trying to hear? Does he confuse words with similar pronunciations? In repeating what a teacher has said, does he frequently substitute a word with a similar sound?

Are there noticeable speech defects? Are there sounds the child does not seem able to say? Is he consistent in his mispronunciation of these sounds, or does he have trouble only if they are at the beginning or the end of a word? Do patterns of "baby talk" persist?

Are there evidences of other types of health problems? How regular is his attendance pattern? Does he seem to tire more easily than most children? Is he listless? Are there any special physical symptoms of which parents do not seem to be aware?

What is the evidence of the child's functioning intellectual ability? It is not safe for a teacher to come to a definite conclusion regarding a child's intellectual ability without considerable test evidence. Many factors can influence judgments. A shy child is sometimes underrated, and a talkative child given credit for more reasoning ability than he actually has. Sometimes the slightly older child, who makes sensible suggestions out of more months of living, is rated as brighter than he really is. Illness, malnutrition, visual or auditory difficulties, or other health factors can affect a child's performance. Furthermore, the experience background with which

a child comes to school may be highly educative in its own way, but may cause him to look confused and unintelligent in the first days of his acquaintance with his classroom setting.

Estimates of intellectual ability are likely to be more reliable if they are secured on the basis of an individual test, such as the *Revised Stanford-Binet Scale*.[25] The young child, particularly, is not always adept in following group directions. A qualified examiner working with a child alone is likely to catch such difficulties. However, such individual tests require training on the part of those who give them. Teachers usually do not have such training, and school systems rarely can afford the services of enough qualified psychologists to test every first-grade child.

Because of the practical difficulty of securing individual test scores for more than a limited number of first-graders, primary group intelligence tests are frequently used. References are suggested at the end of Chapter XIII to aid in locating such tests. In deciding on a specific test, school personnel need to take into account many of the same factors that are important in choosing a readiness test. If the test is to be given early in the first grade, care needs to be taken to select one in which the directions are as simple as possible and the method of indicating answers requires little dexterity in handling a crayon or pencil. Typically the test for the young child is untimed, or has a very generous time limit. Teachers are often urged by test authors to take groups of not more than ten children at one time, and to enlist the aid of a helper if possible. Care must be taken to make sure that children are not copying each other's work, that they are following directions properly, and that they are working on the correct page or exercise.

Even when a test has been carefully given, judgments about the intellectual abilities of first-graders should be very tentative. In a group test, some children may be handicapped by inexperience in following directions, handling pencil and paper, and turning pages. There is also evidence that raises questions regarding the adequacy of existing intelligence tests as measures of the potential ability of the child from an underprivileged area.[26] Because of the difficulty of securing accurate test scores for young children, some school systems prefer to postpone giving intelligence tests until the second

[25] Lewis M Terman and Maude E Merrill, *op. cit.*

[26] Kenneth Eells *et al., Intelligence and Cultural Differences. A Study of Cultural Learning and Problem Solving.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950.

grade. When this is done, teachers rely for the first year on evidence from reading-readiness tests and from classroom situations in which a child's ability can be roughly appraised.

An unusually low score on an intelligence test for a child who gives other evidence of above-average intellectual ability should always be questioned. Exceptionally good use of language, unusually strong prereading abilities, accurate use of number concepts, and logical reasoning are all evidences of intellectual ability in the light of which a low test score can be studied. A score on a reading-readiness test can also be used as a check on an intelligence test score.

Whatever the child's potential ability, the way in which he actually operates in a classroom is important to consider. Without making definite judgments that classify children as "dull," "average," or "bright," teachers can make many helpful observations of the ways in which children are functioning intellectually in the classroom setting. Skills such as interpreting pictures, identifying differences in the configurations of words, and following the gist of a story are in part dependent on intellectual ability. Increased attention span is another sign of functioning intellectual ability. So is capacity to follow increasingly complex directions and to carry out more complicated plans. All these types of growth are important to success in beginning-reading activities.

Immaturity in areas such as interpreting pictures and following the gist of a story does not necessarily mean limited intellectual ability. A child may lack the experiences which would have helped him develop these skills. It is possible, also, that short attention span or inability to follow directions may be the result of social and emotional immaturity, or of physical disabilities. The prereading program will need to be planned in terms of the cause of the difficulty. Sometimes a series of planned experiences can build the needed skills rather quickly. On the other hand, a child may make slow progress in spite of special help. This may mean that intellectual ability is maturing slowly and that a child will need a longer period of prereading experiences before he is encouraged to begin much actual reading.

Suggestions of situations in which to appraise growth in such skills as vocabulary and picture interpretation were made in earlier sections. Other types of observations regarding functioning intellectual ability might be made in areas such as the following:

What seems to be the child's capacity for sustained attention? If he is working with a group, how long does he concentrate on the task at hand? How well does he listen to a story? If he is working on an independent project, does he stay on the job, or does he wander off to watch other children? How well does he keep plans in mind from day to day?

How clearly does he reason on classroom problems? Does he see simple relationships? Is he able to bring past experience to bear on a problem? Does he have logical reasons for disagreeing with other children? Is he able to identify why given suggestions would not work?

How well can he follow directions? Can he remember the equipment he needs? Can he tell clearly what he plans to do? Is he able to carry out a simple project without help? Does he still remember class plans after a short time lapse? How many steps in a project can he keep in mind?

How satisfactory are the social and emotional adjustments the child seems to be making? Behavior in the area of social and emotional adjustments is exceedingly difficult to interpret. It is often easy to see how a child is behaving, but to decide why he is behaving in that fashion, to determine what needs the behavior is satisfying in his life, and to tell how best to help him satisfy those needs through socially acceptable channels is another matter.

Learning to read requires a certain degree of concentration. The child must be willing to stay at the job. His attention must be focussed upon the work at hand. He must be interested and willing to go on with independent tasks when his teacher is occupied with other children. He must be able to share in group discussions without demanding an undue amount of attention or being distracted by the people next to him. Children who are secure in the affection of their parents, who are happy with groups of their peers, who have learned to solve problems for themselves without an undue amount of assistance from adults, and who have learned to face failure or disappointment over a change in plans without undue concern are likely to be better equipped to profit from individual and group experiences at the prereading and beginning-reading levels than are children who are insecure, dependent on others, and unskilled in group relationships.

Human needs to be loved, to be accepted by a group, to be recognized as a contributing group member, and to be like others in a group are very strong. The means through which a child may satisfy such needs are many. Desirable growth will result in his learning to play happily with other children, to share materials with them, to take his part in a cooperative enterprise, and to accept criticism

and suggestions without showing resentment or becoming unduly discouraged. Undesirable means of satisfying such needs will at times lead to behavior patterns that make it much more difficult for the child to learn to read. Teachers need to be able to identify such problems.

This is Charles' first experience in playing with large groups of children. His only approach to them seems to be to poke them, pull their books away, tease them, and use other such devices for gaining attention. When a small group meets to discuss the writing of a class record, Charles' attention is almost entirely devoted to the children on either side of him. They retaliate and within a few minutes a little knot of children has been completely diverted from the task at hand.

Susan is the smallest and quietest child in the room. Previous to entering first grade, she has always played with younger children, and now her size has placed her at a disadvantage in all active games. To save herself from being pushed or knocked down, she has learned to retire quietly with her playthings to a corner where she is not in the way. Most of her class has been actively interested in helping dictate experience records of excursions. Susan has not yet volunteered a suggestion. When asked directly, she replies briefly in a timid voice. Although she apparently examines the books on the library table with interest she never brings a story for the teacher to read to the group.

David's older brother is an exceptionally bright child. He came to the first grade able to read fluently and progressed through the grades with great ease. David did not learn to read at home, although his parents and brother tried to show him how. When the children in his class discussed the various signs on the bulletin board he showed an active interest in learning to read until he made several errors. After that he did not voluntarily seek other opportunities to read. If other children are around he refuses to attempt to do any reading whatsoever. His mother has been to school several times to ask when definite work in reading groups is going to begin and what she can do at home to help. She says that she cannot bear to see David feeling inferior to his older brother and wishes to help him learn as quickly as possible.

Jean has had few experiences in playing with other children. She has moved from one town to another with her parents. Most of her life has been spent in hotel rooms and at nearby parks with her mother. Large playthings were impossible under such living conditions. Now she is enjoying the activities of the first grade thoroughly. She plays well with other children and is expanding under the conditions of dramatic play which prevail in the playhouse. The easel, clay, building blocks, aquarium, and corner museum have all been fascinating to her. In the wealth of stimulating experiences, the printed notices, class records, and other in

centives to read have received little attention. Jean has always had picture books. Her parents have read many stories to her. She comes readily to meet with the children who have just begun to work with a preprimer, but she is quite obviously putting in time until she can get back to more exciting activities.

Here are four children whose needs at present are not primarily concerned with learning to read. Problems of learning to play with other children, of keeping the affection of parents who put a high premium on being as good as one's brother, and of exploring other avenues of self-expression are more important. Until ways are found of helping these children meet such needs, progress in reading is going to be slow. As long as Charles has no other means of approaching children, the reading group will continue to be disrupted. Susan will not make her full contribution to the reading group until she feels more secure with other children. As long as an error in reading is evaluated by David as a sign that he will never receive from his parents the affection that they give to his older brother, he is not going to be willing to try. Until she has experimented with some of the other satisfactions which her previous home life did not provide for her, Jean will continue to give only half-hearted interest to reading.

Teachers should also be concerned with identifying the child who spends an undue proportion of his time with reading materials at the expense of other areas of growth. If home and community emphasis is upon rapid progress in beginning reading, the fact that such children may be developing poor adjustment patterns may not quickly be seen.

Although she is only reading material of a preprimer level, Alice spends much of her time at the library table. She enjoys turning the pages, looking at pictures, and arranging and dusting the books. If other children come to help her she moves away, or sits down with her own book and pays little attention to them. Her mother reports that Alice would much rather stay with her and listen to stories than go out to play. She enjoys drawing pictures to illustrate class records, but she rarely volunteers to share in anything which requires group activity. When the class gathers for group work, she sits to one side, a little apart from other children.

Dorothy announced to the teacher the first day of school, "I can read almost every book you have here, I guess." She is not at all adept in any other kind of activity. Children do not want her in their games because she does not know how to follow the rules. Her attempts to help with the

wallpaper for the play corner resulted in spilled paint. Her greatest joy and main source of satisfaction are to be able to read bulletin boards, preprimers, and other materials better than any other child. She boasts of her reading ability, and makes fun of other children when they make errors.

These two little girls are apparently headed toward successful reading experiences. Yet, like Charles, Susan, David, and Jean, they have needs that are more important to their all-round development at present than the need to learn to read. If either of these girls continues in her present behavior pattern, she is likely to develop into a poorly adjusted child, unhappy because she is not accepted by the group and lacking in the techniques for cooperation that are of such great importance in our world today. Social and emotional immaturity may at times lead to situations in which it is difficult, if not impossible, for a child to be successful in learning to read. It is also true that ability to read, if used as an outlet by a child who is socially and emotionally immature, may hinder development in other areas that are of equal importance when total growth is considered.

Little objective test data can be secured from very young children in areas of social and emotional development. Recently there has been considerable study of the possibilities of using projective techniques in which a child gives his own responses to a relatively unstructured test situation, through such devices as a picture, a creative story, or dramatic play.[27] The responses of first-graders can be studied by observing the child's drawings of his family; by studying the themes in his creative stories dictated to the teacher; by studying themes, colors, and significant methods of work in pictures; and by listening to his dramatic play. Evidence secured from such observations has to be interpreted with caution, as it is relatively easy for the teacher to read into a child's responses implications that are not sound. However, in the hands of experienced persons, such devices are proving of significant value. Teachers who are interested in their use should make an effort both to read widely and to secure special training.

Identifying problems of social and emotional adjustment through classroom activities is a matter of studying the child in many different settings. It is difficult to suggest specific types of behavior

[27] Hilda Taba *et al., Diagnosing Human Relations Needs.* Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1951.

CHAPTER IV

PROVIDING PREREADING EXPERIENCES

A LOOK AT A TYPICAL FIRST-GRADE CLASSROOM

One of the most striking aspects of a first grade classroom in the early fall is the amount of reading material around the room. Long before children have begun to do much reading for themselves, they are surrounded by stimulations to learn to read. Books, for the most part, are in large print. Signs and records prepared by the teacher are in manuscript writing or printed with a hand-printing set. Wherever possible these materials are hung low enough to be easily seen. What would a visitor find if he looked into a typical first-grade room?

Books are available in a library corner. In an attractive corner, away from the center of activities, is a library table, flanked by low bookcases. On the table are picture books, simple stories, alphabet books, and a few mimeographed copies of stories which the children themselves have dictated. Some preprimers, reserved for supplementary reading, are also in evidence.

Bulletin boards contain aids to classroom activities. The bulletin board is another attraction to those who would learn to read. On one corner is a poster labelled, *September Birthdays*. Under it are three names. Next to this is a chart marked *Helpers*. This is a list of room responsibilities—lunch, paper, plants, boards, and others. Beside each responsibility are the names of two children. In another part of the bulletin board is a sign, *To Tell Our Mothers*. At present, the only notice reads, *Party on Friday*.

Children's pictures have captions. Across the back of the room is a series of pictures painted by the children. Under many of them are simple captions—*This is Spot. He is Peter's dog; Marjorie lives in a house like this; Bob's kitten is white.* Another small bulletin board has a number of photographs of children, their homes and their families. At the top there is the large label, *Boys and Girls in Our Class*. Under the

pictures are captions such as, *Betty and her brother; Sally Lou; Mike lives here.*

Special equipment has signs to guide its use. Posted near the easel is a simple color chart. Each color is represented by a circle of colored paper and has its name printed beside it. On some of the storage shelves and under some of the hooks are signs indicating where materials belong. Above the hooks in the cloakroom and on the backs of the chairs are the children's names. Near the library table is a sign saying, *We take care of our books.*

Experience records preserve the important aspects of group experiences. From the railing of the chalkboard at the front of the room hangs a report of a recent trip to a nearby grocery store, dictated by the children. On an easel is a chart labelled, *Today's News.* Posted on the bulletin board is a record titled, *Plans for Our Party.* On the back wall is another called, *We Are Good Housekeepers.*

This is a typical setting for prereading and beginning-reading experiences. The various signs and captions refer to the on-going activities of the classroom. Children are not expected to be able to read all these materials at first, but they are working in an atmosphere where reading is important. There is a reason why they should pay attention to each notice, caption, sign, or story. As the activities of the group move forward, the reading materials around the room will change. There will be new purposes for reading and new needs for printed reminders and records. Were this classroom a kindergarten, rather than a first grade, the amount of reading matter would not be as great, since most of the children would be many months farther away from beginning reading, but the signs and notices would have the same functional relationship to the on going activities of the group as do those that have just been described.

In developing a first-grade program so that it makes its most effective contribution to success in beginning reading, teachers face several problems about which the sections of this chapter are built First, what general objectives should guide the development of prereading activities? Second, how can the total primary program be developed so that it is an effective setting for the child's prereading experiences? Third, how can the child's classroom activities contribute directly to prereading skills? Fourth, what is the place of commercially-published reading-readiness materials? Finally, how can the prereading program be varied to meet individual needs?

GUIDES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PREREADING EXPERIENCES

What makes for an effective prereading program? In the discussion in Chapter III of factors related to readiness for beginning reading, general implications for the planning of prereading activities were pointed out. These suggest some definite criteria as guides for the development of prereading experiences.

The setting is a rich primary program. The broad objective of the modern school is to develop well-rounded individuals, able to make maximum use of their capacities; socially and emotionally mature; sound in their understanding of, and ability to cope with, the world in which they live; and efficient in using the skills basic to solving problems, to calculating, to understanding the oral and written expression of others, and to making ideas clear to others. Learning to read is one of many areas of growth.

Prereading experiences were described in Chapter III as the verbal aspects of activities designed to help first-graders to become better able to deal with themselves and their world. Looked at in this way, the prereading program is not an isolated part of the primary program for which special blocks of time are set aside, although there may be occasions when it is important to plan specific practice activities for individuals or for small groups. Every experience has a potential contribution to make.

All prereading skills find a place. A child's prereading experiences should provide for every skill that he will need when he begins to read independently. This means opportunities for oral expression; contacts with printed words; situations where it is important to distinguish among the shapes and sounds of words; and experiences in interpreting pictures and in handling books. Whenever there is need to discuss, to write a record, to post a notice, to turn to a book for help, or to examine a picture, there is an opportunity to build toward successful experiences in learning to read. Even an initialled purse or a new "T-shirt" with the picture and name of a television hero can play a part.

Interest and awareness, not reading itself, is the aim. In the classrooms that have been described, children read, in a sense, from the very beginning. They find their names on lockers. They use a combination of words and pictures on a helpers' chart to identify their special responsibilities. They point out the experience record composed when they talked about things to do on the playground and,

with the help of the accompanying illustrations, they "read" the games they listed. However, the major teaching emphasis is not upon making certain that each child knows, for sure, each new word or phrase. Although teachers keep in mind the reading tasks the children will be facing a little later and stay well within children's stock of word meanings, the vocabulary load of the prereading environment is relatively heavy. The words used in classroom records are not restricted to typical preprimer vocabulary, nor is the amount of repetition provided that will be needed a little later to help beginning readers acquire a stock of words they can recognize at sight. What is sought at the prereading level is a child's interest in reading, his ability to follow the gist of a story when it is read to him, and his growing alertness to the configurations of words.

Individuals travel at different paces. All children will not be ready to profit from beginning-reading experiences at the same time nor will all need the same kinds of prereading activities. Then, there will be youngsters whose success in learning to read will hinge not as much upon experiences with books and stories as it will upon intellectual maturity, upon learning to get along with other children, upon health factors, upon ability to work independently, or upon richness of experience background. These needs must be taken into account, not only for the sake of the child's success in learning to read, but for the sake of his total adjustment, both in school and out. Indeed, the teacher who places success in reading above all other aspects of development often fails to achieve the very thing she most wants. The prereading program needs to be flexible—in the types of experiences planned for children, in the time at which children are encouraged to participate in beginning-reading activities, and in the emphasis placed upon the development of prereading skills.

PROVIDING THE SETTING FOR PREREADING EXPERIENCES IN THE TOTAL PRIMARY PROGRAM

The general nature of the first-grade program has much to do with determining the richness and variety of the child's prereading experiences. Three major aspects in the development of the child's total primary experiences deserve special consideration. First, there is the problem of helping the child adjust to school. Although some children will have had kindergarten experiences, many will not. All will need some help in fitting into the first-grade classroom and in

learning to live and work together. Second, there is the problem of providing activities to widen first-graders' background of experience. Third, there is the whole area of helping children to become self-directing in their activities. How may these three important aspects of the total primary program be developed to provide the most effective setting for children's prereading experiences?

Helping the Child Adjust to School

Identify the points of potential difficulty. School offers many unfamiliar experiences to the beginner. While some children fit readily into this new environment, others find the adjustment difficult. A classroom is different from most playrooms at home. Lockers, bookshelves, tables and chairs, chalkboards, easels may all be new. Some children will have worked with paints and have handled crayons and clay, but others may have had little or no experience with such media.

Even more complicated than adjusting to the physical surroundings in a classroom may be the problem of learning to live and work in a large group. In this group setting, children have to become acquainted with many new types of activities—planning sessions, sharing periods, group games and songs, story hours. Flexible though the program may be, first-graders also have to learn to live within a time schedule—to change from one activity to another, to be willing to put things away when requested, and to be ready with the class to go on to a new activity. Sharing space, materials, and equipment with other people also calls for learning how to be a good housekeeper—to keep one's table neat, to put back scissors where one found them, to leave the paint brushes clean, to put one's possessions carefully in one's desk or locker.

First-graders have to learn how to fit into the larger school setting. In most schools, playgrounds, washrooms, lunchroom, halls, and auditorium must be shared with other classes. Here arise other problems in group relationships. Many children, both rural and urban, have an adjustment to make as they learn to travel on the school bus. Still other new learnings are needed in finding one's way around a school—learning to go to the washroom alone, to get a drink of water, to go to the principal's office with a message, to go through the cafeteria line in the lunchroom.

Because it is important to make sure that first experiences in school are happy ones, teachers devote considerable time in the early fall to problems of school adjustment. This is specially important in

first grades where few of the children have had kindergarten experience. In school systems in which there are kindergartens, much emphasis in this first year is upon helping children learn to live and work happily together.

Provide a flexible and informal program. First steps toward working and playing happily with other children are taken with greater ease in a classroom where the program is relatively informal and flexible. This informality shows, in part, in the way children are seated. Often groups sit around tables. If the classroom is equipped with individual desks, these are frequently pulled into small groups. Part of the day's activities are planned so that there are opportunities to work alone, or with a relatively small number of other children—to paint, to draw a picture of one's family to be shared with the class, to be one of the group playing house in the play corner. In these situations children come to know each other and develop ways of working together. These informal situations also help the teacher to become better acquainted with her group.

In a typical first-grade schedule, all-class activities help individuals begin to feel part of the larger group. Some of these will be group planning or sharing periods. Other all-class activities may center in story hours, group games, or songs. For such activities children are often seated in an informal circle around the teacher. At first the amount of time given to each activity is relatively short.

Group projects, developed as unit activities, also provide opportunities to learn to work together. Such projects in the early fall may be concerned with decorating our room; planning our playhouse; arranging pictures for our bulletin board; finding how to care for the fish in our aquarium; becoming acquainted with other people in the school who help us; or planning for a Hallowe'en party. These activities, too, are flexibly planned. Each child finds a place both in contributing to class plans and in sharing in special aspects of the project on which he may be working alone or with a small group.

Talk out problems of how to live and work together. In most primary classrooms children are helped to feel at home quickly in the early fall because problems of living together are talked over with them, and they are helped to feel responsible for the smooth running of their school activities. "When we start to work, everybody can't come to the desk for help at once. How could we be sure that we each have what we need?" "The first grade goes out to play at ten

o'clock. The second grade comes out when we go in, so we must be ready or we will lose some play time. What should we do, then, when time comes to clean up?" "Before we go home today we want to look at your pictures, so when the clock says half-past two I am going to ask you to bring them here where we all can see." "We need some helpers for our lunch. Let's think what jobs they need to do. How could each of us at the tables help the most?" Time spent in the first few months helping children think through how to live together brings rich rewards later when the teacher wishes to work with a reading group or to give help on some other special project, assured that regular activities will continue as planned.

Give definite help in becoming acquainted with new materials and equipment. Children will adjust to school more readily in a classroom where time is set aside to help them learn how to use new materials and equipment. Help is usually given early with such general problems as how to carry chairs, scissors, paint jars, or other equipment that is hard to handle. Sometimes children assist in arranging the room, suggest where it would be convenient to keep certain equipment, and learn something of how to use and care for it in the process. When new media for creative expression are introduced, children are sometimes given help in small groups as they take turns experimenting. Additional assistance can be provided during individualized work periods. It is often an aid to devote special discussion periods to setting standards regarding how equipment is to be used—how many people may work at the easel at once, how large a group can play in the playhouse corner, what special precautions should be observed in working with the heavy building blocks. When time is taken to meet such problems as they arise, youngsters will be better able to proceed independently with their work later in the year, when the teacher needs uninterrupted periods for reading groups.

Plan a trip to become acquainted with the school. Many first-grade teachers find it helpful to take their classes on a trip around the school. The children go to the principal's office and talk to him about how he helps them. They locate the classrooms in which older brothers and sisters work. They go down to the engine-room to meet the engineer. They talk to the custodian and ask how they can plan their housekeeping to be of the most help to him. They look into the kitchen and talk about good behavior in the lunchroom. They meet the school nurse and are shown the medical office. They look

into the library. All such experiences help to build a feeling of at-homeness in the school. Over the year they may also serve to develop new interests and understandings.

Building Experience Background

Provide a stimulating classroom environment. The problems involved in building experience background differ from child to child and from group to group. Teachers need to study the children in their particular classes and then to plan appropriate activities to widen acquaintance with the immediate world. Many courses of study recommend that, for first graders, such activities should center around the environment near at hand homes, school, and some of the more important community helpers.[1] Some of these experiences are developed as extended units of work Others may be planned as shorter projects Some will involve the whole class some groups, and some individuals.

The classroom environment itself needs to be one that stimulates new interests. Bulletin boards can be used for picture displays about holidays, community helpers, interesting pets, homes we live in, or toys we like. Window boxes or plants can be used to encourage science interests. So can an aquarium, a pet rabbit or a pair of hamsters. Building blocks offer possibilities for constructing a store, a lunch counter, or a post office. A small hot plate can be used for cooking apple sauce or making jelly. A table can be set aside to display special objects the children bring to school The picture books on a library table can be used to develop many different interests

Media for creative expression form part of a stimulating classroom environment. Even in classrooms where equipment is relatively meager, there can be many materials for children to explore. Poster paint and brown wrapping paper can be used for individual projects or for group murals Colored paper saved from Christmas wrappings, backs of book covers, and insides of candy boxes can be made into interesting designs or used instead of paint for parts of a picture Orange crates can be used for furniture or for bookshelves Remnants of cloth can be fashioned into many different things—a mattress for the doll bed, a dress or an apron for the doll, a costume for a dramatization, curtains for the windows of the playhouse Wallpaper cleaner molds as readily as clay Paper, paste, and patience are all

[1] See, for example, *New Primary Manual*, Curriculum Bulletin 300 Cincinnati Cincinnati Public Schools, 1953.

that is needed for projects with papier-mâché. Even discarded tin cans have their uses.

Plan for wider acquaintance with the immediate community. Many first-grade teachers plan for activities that take children out of their classrooms into their local communities. These trips are not isolated experiences. They are planned as a result of group discussions, expressions of interest, and indications of lack of experience. In the fall, the children decide to have a party to show their classroom to their mothers. With the permission of the principal the entire class goes to the nearby grocery to buy cookies for refreshments. They learn how to ask the clerk for what they want and they observe the cash register as they pay their bill. They see other articles for sale and perhaps note foods that are not familiar to them. When they come back, they talk about their trip and raise questions about the things they saw. Sometimes these questions call for a second trip or suggest that a guest be invited to school to provide more information. Needs for other trips arise in a similar fashion. From the classroom window, workmen can be seen laying the foundation for a new highway. The children keep a record of progress from day to day and learn about new materials, equipment, and ways of working. The immediate school neighborhood, whether it be the busy streets of a large city, the farms of the rural district, or the homes and gardens of the small town, provides many opportunities for enriching experience background.

Tap the resources in children's homes. A wealth of possibilities for enriching experience background can be found in children's homes. Someone lives in a house that is being remodeled. What can he tell about the carpenter and the plumber? Does he know whether the wallpaper paste is similar to the paste used in the classroom? Someone else tells about a new tractor or about caring for a lamb. Parents may come to talk about their occupations. A collection of the grains being harvested, a pet rabbit in the classroom for the morning, a description of the birds that occupied the bird house all summer and then disappeared in the fall, or a favorite picture or story book all may add to the experience background of the group and often contribute much to the development of the child who makes the contribution.

Make appropriate use of other types of audio-visual aids. Among the most effective audio-visual aids for beginners are the concrete objects they bring to the classroom, or go out of the classroom to see.

However, motion pictures, slides, exhibits, and records are also important in building experience background. A number of educational motion pictures now have the clarity of detail and simplicity needed for use with young children. Recordings may supply some of the musical experiences not provided in the home. Pictures clipped from magazines can become topics of discussion. Often the answers to questions can be found in the pictures of some of the books that are still too difficult for children to read. Museums sometimes loan exhibits that can be handled as well as looked at. Children may also build their own classroom museums.

Pictures are one step removed from reality. Size relationships for example, can be confused for the child who has not been to a zoo if an elephant and a bear are presented in separate pictures, each the same size. Such materials need to be appraised in terms of the maturity of the group and the experience background from which they will be interpreted.

Helping Children Learn to Work Independently and Cooperatively

Provide for pupil-teacher planning. A rich and varied primary program in which the teacher has time to work with individual children and small groups cannot be developed unless children are able to take independent responsibility for many of their activities. The larger the class size, the more important it is for individuals to be self reliant. Talking problems through with children was suggested earlier as a way of helping them adjust to school. This technique is equally important in helping them learn to work without the step by step guidance of the teacher. Letting children share in planning their activities and encouraging their independence in carrying out their plans does not mean relinquishing leadership responsibilities. Rather it frees the teacher to give more effective guidance at points where children cannot be expected to work alone. When reading groups are established, it makes for a program where many worth-while activities can go forward while the teacher is occupied with the children who are reading.

Planning periods can be used to help children decide what activities to undertake and to give them general suggestions as to how to begin. At times, these plans may involve the entire class, at others, small groups or individuals. In a typical planning session, needed materials, ways of working, and decisions as to which children are to take responsibility for various aspects of a project are thought through. The

children then start to work with definite understanding of what they want to do and how to go about it. In the early part of the year, teachers usually circulate around the room after a planning session, helping individuals, noting where plans went awry, and identifying the children who seem to have most difficulty in following through on a job.

Evaluation periods are an important aspect of the total planning process. In these periods the children talk through what they have done Difficulties are identified and suggestions for improvement are made; progress is appraised; and next steps are often projected. The work of today, in this way, becomes the basis for part of the plans for the activities of tomorrow. If the activities planned are within the understanding of children, have meaning for them, and seem to them to be worth while, it does not take long to develop, at least in the more mature members of the group, considerable ability to work without step by-step supervision.

As children become accustomed to working together, some of their activities expand into units that take several days, or even weeks, to complete. How such units can serve to build wider acquaintance with the local community has already been described. Once general plans have been laid, many activities related to the unit can be carried forward by individuals and groups with a relatively small amount of supervision by the teacher. One group, for example, proposed that the library chairs and table needed a fresh coat of paint. Deciding on colors, finding how to use the paint, deciding how to take turns at the task, and arranging for helpers for the painters all involved careful plans, and much of the teacher's time. Although there were occasional emergencies, once the project was under way the children were able to work with a minimum of direct supervision. Children in another class began to construct a model of their community, using building blocks and other classroom materials and bringing from home toys to use for the cars and trucks on the streets. This project lasted for several weeks. All children were not equally involved in all aspects of the project, but those most interested carried out many details of their plans without much help. Such units call for general plans at the start and for specific planning and evaluation sessions day by day. In the beginning, the teacher's help is needed at almost every point. As the work progresses, individuals become able to carry on alone, and the teacher is free to give help with other types of problems.

Find a place in the schedule for individual activities. Another way of helping children learn to work independently is to allow time in the schedule for individual activities such as painting, drawing pictures, building, playing with toys, or examining library books. These individual work periods help to develop talents and interests. They also acquaint children with activities in which they may later be occupied constructively while the teacher works with reading groups. As time goes on, independent reading experiences, number games, and various forms of written expression may be added to the activities appropriate for independent work.

Delegate classroom housekeeping responsibilities. Keeping the classroom a pleasant place in which to live offers another avenue for fruitful independent activity. Most primary teachers delegate certain classroom responsibilities such as caring for bookcases, passing napkins for lunch, dusting, or watering plants. This is not a matter of saving time. It is another way of helping children learn to follow agreed upon plans and to meet obligations. Such assignments also provide constructive activities in which children can engage without close supervision. The child who finishes one piece of work early need not stand by the teacher's side waiting for a new suggestion, or annoy his neighbors, if he has a housekeeping responsibility to carry out.

Store materials and equipment where they can be reached easily. Children's independence can be increased if materials are stored where they can be reached. Paper used regularly can be placed on a low shelf, and, if necessary, one or two children put in charge of distributing it. Pencils, crayons, scissors, paint brushes, and other equipment also need to be kept within reach. As suggested earlier, time needs to be spent early in the fall teaching children how to use classroom equipment. The more of their classroom environment the children can be helped to control, the more easy it is to provide a variety of activities for them and still to give the special help needed for the development of fundamental skills through reading, arithmetic, or language groups.

BUILDING PREREADING SKILLS

Activities designed to develop prereading skills were identified earlier as those aspects of first-grade experiences that call for oral expression; for the use of books, stories, signs, and other printed matter in meaningful settings; for gross discrimination among words by their shapes or their sounds; for interpretation of pictures; and for simple

techniques of handling books. How can the varied activities of the first grade be used most effectively to develop these skills? How can teachers give the help needed to assure the desired growth without sacrificing the continuity of an experience to its prereading possibilities? What types of special practice activities might be provided?

Increasing Facility in the Use of Language

Plan for sharing periods. Every aspect of the primary program has a contribution to make to the child's increased ability to express himself clearly and to understand the expression of others. However, there are certain key points where it is particularly easy to give help with language development. Group sharing periods are excellent situations in which children can be helped to follow a sequence of ideas and to express their own opinions. These are the times when children tell of special happenings of interest to them. Someone may have a new birthday present to show to the group. Someone else may have been sent a postcard with a particularly interesting picture. Somebody's family may have gone to town over the weekend. Most teachers provide for such informal conversation periods regularly. They may involve the whole class, or a small group with a common interest. Children often sit in a circle on the floor around the teacher's chair. Those who have something to tell stand near her where they can be seen and heard. They are not necessarily expected to make long contributions. Some will say only a sentence or two. Others will be able to relate a well-ordered series of events. Those who are listening are encouraged to ask questions and to join in the discussion.

In a sharing period the teacher, in leading the discussion, can assist the child who has difficulty. A well-timed question will help him put his ideas into words. "Why?" "What happened next?" "And then what did you do?" help to develop a sense of sequence. Children who are shy can be encouraged through the teacher's interest in their contribution. Inadequate vocabulary can be supplemented by supplying the correct word, or by asking others in the group if they know what the right word would be. Because the children are talking about events important in their lives, it is often relatively easy to help them to express themselves effectively. Sometimes it is possible to arrange for smaller conversation groups in which the children most in need of this type of experience can have wider participation without the strain of the larger class group.

Capitalize on planning and evaluation sessions. Planning periods and periods in which work is being evaluated offer other opportunities to build ability to communicate effectively. These sessions are particularly valuable for the development of clear oral expression because they center on topics close to the lives of the children. Almost everyone can have an idea about how to keep tables tidy or what to do about the clothes that are falling off the hooks in the cloakroom. It is relatively easy to put such a suggestion into a clear sentence because the suggestion itself is clearly understood. Acting as discussion leader, the teacher can help children learn how to keep their discussion to the general topic. Ideas that do not bear upon the problem at hand can be set aside and referred to later. Children can be helped to develop ability to follow the sequence of events as they outline step by step what they plan to do. Opportunities for vocabulary building often arise. In these informal situations where the teacher shares in the discussion there are many opportunities to develop better ways of putting ideas into words without embarrassing the child who is making the contribution.

Make use of the discussions centering around activities planned to broaden experience background. Activities that contribute to wider experience background also contribute to growth in ability to use language effectively. Excursions, trips to other parts of the school, new pictures on the bulletin board, new equipment in the classroom, the first snowfall of the season, the workmen on the nearby project, all provide new and interesting things to talk about. Freedom of expression is facilitated in these situations because children are commenting on things they know first-hand.

Many of the activities that broaden experience background offer opportunities to develop classroom records. These are times when children talk about what they have seen, tell what would be most important to remember, and suggest phrasing for the teacher to write. As these records are being composed, there are opportunities to discuss the importance of telling events in sequence and of giving complete sentences. These discussions also can contribute much to children's growing stock of word meanings. Each new object seen or handled and each new place visited can be used to clarify new concepts.

The pictures in commercially-prepared reading-readiness workbooks offer another opportunity for small-group discussion. Children can discuss experiences of their own that are similar to those of the

children in the picture; tell about their own trip to the farm, the store, or the Zoo; or find pictures of objects or animals that are new and interesting to them.

Capitalize on needs to communicate with other persons in the school. Other opportunities to develop skill in oral expression arise because children are part of the larger school community. "We need to ask the principal if we may go for a walk tomorrow. What shall we say?" "We are to have a visitor today. What can we tell her about our work?" "The second grade has invited us to their party. What shall we ask the teacher to write in our letter telling them we would like to come?" These are important reasons to express ideas as clearly as possible. Teachers seize such opportunities to discuss what needs to be said, how it should be said, and what the people being thanked or entertained would like to hear. At times the whole class shares in such discussions. At others, the teacher works with the group directly involved.

Make provision for the sharing of stories. Stories are another rich source of language experiences. Children need varied and rich listening experiences with stories, both told and read. This early acquaintance with what might be termed a child's heritage of prose and verse helps to develop interest in reading. It also provides opportunities to identify events in sequence and develops beginning sensitivity to plot and character delineation. A special story hour needs to be a definite part of the primary program.

Children grow through telling stories. Sometimes special story telling groups are formed where the children dictate stories to the teacher. A little later in the year mimeographed versions of these stories may be part of the reading experiences of some children. Sharing periods may be used to allow children to tell stories of events of special interest to them. Sometimes children can be encouraged to tell stories about pictures they have drawn. The stories told by children are not necessarily long. What is most important is to help them learn to express themselves to others, even if they use only a few sentences.

Story telling can be used effectively to help children learn how to relate events in sequence. It offers opportunities to develop new vocabulary by commenting on a particularly apt word used by a child, or by helping a child find the correct word to express what he means. Many story-telling situations can be made even more fruitful for growth in language skills by encouraging the children to discuss what they have just heard. "How do you think he felt?" "And what

do you suppose happened next?" "What do you think he did?" "Would you like to have been there?"

Children who find it difficult to tell stories may be helped by practice activities where the teacher reads part of a story and the children tell what they think the ending might be. Telling about pictures also may help. Special practice in following a sequence can be given through the sections of reading-readiness workbooks that tell a story through a series of pictures arranged comic-book style. Occasionally, advertising strips in magazines depict children's activities in picture sequence. These can be clipped and mounted for classroom use. Such picture sequences can be used for group discussions where children take turns telling what they think happened. A little later in the year, such story-telling activities will be part of a child's beginning-reading experiences as he follows the pictures accompanying the stories in a preprimer.

Provide opportunities for dramatic play. Dramatic play offers other opportunities for language development. Many of the most worth while of these experiences develop informally, sometimes with little guidance from the teacher, as two or three children play they are the family in the playhouse, the clerk and customer in a store, or the driver and passengers on a bus. Children who find it difficult to express themselves before the group sometimes lose their self-consciousness in these make-believe situations. Such activities have many educational possibilities in the first grade. Children can learn much about working and playing cooperatively, about taking turns, and about explaining ideas to others as the dramatic play progresses.

In addition to informal dramatic play, there are many opportunities for planned dramatizations centering around stories or poems familiar to the children. These activities make their greatest contribution to skill in oral expression when they, too, are informal. Teacher and children talk over the story in order to become familiar with the characters and the plot. Then the children take turns acting the various parts. At times the teacher, or a narrator chosen from the group, tells the story while the characters act the parts in pantomime; at others, the characters speak for themselves, expressing the general idea of the story in their own words. Each time the story is dramatized, the conversation and the action are likely to be somewhat different. The aim is not a polished performance; it is to enjoy making a favorite story come to life.

Dramatic play offers opportunities to develop new concepts. "What

does the conductor call when he is ready to start?" "What would she say if she were very sad?" "What do you call the thing he was looking for?" These activities also can be used to develop sensitivity to the sequence of a story. Perhaps most important, they provide many opportunities for informal self-expression.

Find time for informal conversations. Most teachers find a few minutes during the day to talk with individual children. Some opportunities to talk with individuals come in the early morning and at noon as children are coming into the classroom and, again, as they are leaving school. Sometimes in a planning session the children whose plans are clear go ahead with their work while one or two with special problems stay to talk with the teacher. Individual work periods offer time for the teacher to become better acquainted with one child at a time. If there is a lunch period, the teacher often moves to a new table each day to encourage conversation.

Children also grow in effective oral expression when they have an opportunity to talk with each other. Today's classrooms are not silent rooms. Children learn to give polite attention in audience situations. However, in work sessions, within limits that keep others from being disturbed, they are allowed to talk with each other as they work. They learn to ask each other for help, to give suggestions, and to share ideas. The buzz of conversation that is typical of a first grade at work is highly desirable from the standpoint of language development. It is highly desirable, also, from the standpoint of developing the skills of democratic living.

Encourage correct speech. Although some speech defects will require the advice and help of specialists, the experiences in every classroom can be planned so that they encourage correct speech habits in the majority of children. The teacher needs to be sure that her own pronunciation and enunciation are clear and distinct. Times when she is working with children individually offer opportunities to help those with faulty enunciation or pronunciation to speak more clearly. Small-group activities are often helpful for children who stammer or stutter. All-class sharing periods are times when children can be encouraged to speak clearly so that all may understand, yet the informal circle in which children typically sit for these group sessions means that the audience is not a formidable one. The opportunities for oral expression that have been described in detail in the preceding sections help to provide an atmosphere conducive to building correct speech patterns.

Building Interest in Learning to Read

Provide for varied uses of books. The typical first-grade classroom has been described as one in which there are many reading materials. These materials help to build interest in reading and to develop a desire to read. They also provide the informal contacts with printed matter important for developing ability to identify similarities and differences among words, a sense of left-to-right direction, and other skills with printed matter that will be important when independent reading is begun.

A variety of books in the classroom provides one of the most natural stimulations to learn to read. Some of these will be stories that are read to the children. Others may be used by teacher and children together to locate needed information. Still others will be very simple books that children can enjoy by themselves. In most classrooms, books that the children explore independently are placed in a library corner. Since few children will recognize many words at the beginning of the year, the pictures in most of these first books should tell a rather clear story. Alphabet books are useful. However, children also enjoy looking again at pictures in a more difficult book after the story has been read to them. In addition, some teachers construct little one-word picture books to review important vocabulary items. Whatever the collection in the library corner, it should be changed from time to time so that interest in new materials is sustained.

A commercially-prepared reading-readiness book is another type of book that can be placed in children's hands. Although many pages of these prereading materials are given over to work-type exercises, they also contain stories. Some of these are sequential picture stories in sets of four or six pictures to be read from left to right and from top to bottom of the page. Some are single-sentence story captions accompanying pictures. These simple materials can be used to develop interest in books and to provide valuable experiences in picture interpretation, oral expression, and discrimination among the configurations of words.

Although the teacher carries the burden of reading the exact contents of a book at the prereading level, there are many ways of using books to build a desire to read independently. Children can be asked to choose for a story hour the books they like the best. This means being able to identify the title of a familiar tale. When a story is read to them, they can participate by discussing the pictures. They can also

examine the pictures in an article providing needed information. When the names of characters in the book are the same as those of children in class, they can try to read them. Children who are beginning to identify other words or phrases may be encouraged to try their skill when these words or phrases appear in the story. All such experiences help children to become interested in books.

Make use of experience records. In the early part of the first grade, the charts used as records of classroom activities offer at least as much stimulation to learn to read as do the books in the library corner. Not all experiences should lead automatically to a set of records. Any such routine emphasis is likely to make the reading side of the activity a burden. However, there are many genuine needs for records—a class book that contains the records of all the trips we have taken, the poems we have composed this year; a record of the day we went to the apple orchard for our mothers to read; the questions we asked the bus driver and what he told us; our recipe for apple sauce; our daily news bulletin. Records such as these continue to serve a purpose long after children have begun to read. Detailed suggestions as to their use with more skilled readers are given in Chapter VIII.

Teachers and children—the entire class, or the group specially concerned—compose such records together. This allows for many of the experiences in oral expression discussed in the preceding section.

MISS K: Who can think what we might call our story?
JOHN: We could say "The Store."
BETTY: No, it was our trip. Maybe it could be "Our Trip to the Store."
MISS K: Which do you like better? . . . How many would like to call it "Our Trip to the Store"? . . . Where shall we write it?
SALLY: It goes up at the top.
MISS K: Then I'll write "Our Trip to the Store" up here Now, what do you think it is most important to tell?
JOHN: Well, first we should say we went there.
MISS K: Where would I start to write that? . . Yes, right over here. Should we tell what kind of store it was?
RON: It was a grocery store.
MISS K: Then shall I write "We went to the grocery store?" What might come next?
JOAN: It was almost time to go home when we got back to school.
MISS K: Do you think that comes next, or are there some things we saw at the store that we want to tell about?
SUE: We should tell what we saw, because we wanted to know what the store sold.
BETTY: They sell fruits. We saw some bananas.

After the record is completed at the board, it is often transferred to paper. It needs to be written in manuscript writing, or printed with a hand printing set. Lines should be kept short. Often each sentence is indented as a separate paragraph, much as the first sentences will be in the books used for beginning-reading activities a little later on. Some teachers prefer to indent slightly the second line of a two-line sentence rather than to follow regular preprimer style. This has the disadvantage of posing for the child a reading problem slightly different from that which he will meet in a preprimer, and perhaps of causing slightly more stilted oral reading, but it has the advantage of making the beginnings of sentences easy to see. This may be particularly helpful in a rather long chart. If the record is one that is likely to be reread during the year, it is often put on heavy paper or oak-tag so that it can withstand handling. If it is something that is needed only for a day or so, lighter paper may be used or the original record may be left on the board. Daily plans, reminders of dates, and notices of special events of the day, such as birthdays, are illustrative of temporary material. Records summarizing various experiences in a unit, songs or poems, and stories are more likely to be needed again. Insofar as possible, experience records are hung at the children's eye level. Sometimes oak tag records are placed on easels and fastened together with steel rings so that children can turn easily from chart to chart.

In constructing and using experience records, teachers find many opportunities to develop prereading skills. As they begin to write, they may comment on where they begin and the direction in which they write. If the records are truly purposeful, there will be reason to reread them. When they are referred to again, the teacher has the opportunity to ask what the record was about, how it began, and what was said. Soon the children begin to identify the titles and to recognize words that are used frequently. Often teachers have the children illustrate a record by placing a picture next to its matching sentence. This makes it possible to "read" selected lines even though all the words are not recognized. As the children indicate the general gist of a line, the teacher may read exactly what it says.

MISS K: Yes, we put down what we saw at the store so that we could tell our friends when they came to visit. Do you remember what we said first?
BETTY: We told that we went to the store.
MISS K: That's right. What kind of store was it?
JOHN: A grocery store.

MISS K: Can anyone remember how we said it? . . . Yes, we started by saying, "We went to the store." Where did we put that part of our story? . . . Does anyone remember what it said up here just above the part that says, "We went to the grocery store"? . . .

RON: That's the name of our story.

MISS K: Who thinks he knows where we began the list of the things we saw?

SUE: It was down here, where the picture is.

MISS K: Shall I read them one at a time, and we'll see if we have planned for a picture of each one. The picture beside the first one tells what it was. . . . We put "Bananas" first, didn't we?

In these discussions, the children see the teacher point to the appropriate lines and help her to find key words, using the clues she suggests. Soon, in their beginning-reading activities, some of them may see how many times they can find a given word, match the words on the chart with word or phrase cards, read whole lines for themselves, or engage in activities that have as their major objective helping children become able to recognize a specific number of words or phrases for themselves. Illustrations of the use of experience records in such beginning reading activities are given in Chapter V.

Capitalize on needs for special signs and notices. Many other contacts with words, phrases, and sentences can be provided in the typical first grade classroom. Effective use needs to be made of classroom bulletin boards. Here birthdays, special holidays, and important plans can be posted. Some teachers save a corner of the bulletin board or the chalkboard for news items of the day. Children may help to suggest what should be included. Often part of the bulletin board is saved for pictures to which are appended appropriate captions. Sometimes special classroom activities are featured. A picture of an easel is posted and below is the caption, *Who will paint a picture?* Children are pictured listening to a story and below is the caption, *We like to hear stories.* A picture of a park carries the message, *We are going to the park on Thursday.* Another section of the bulletin board may be saved for records of a more permanent nature, such as the list of helpers responsible for various housekeeping tasks or a simple schedule showing where the hands of the clock will be when it is time for recess and for noon lunch. These short notices offer daily incentives to learn to read.

All signs and notices need not be on bulletin boards. Rules about how many children are to use certain equipment at one time may be

posted near the equipment. Sometimes a stick-figure picture is added so that those who cannot read are reminded of the general gist of the message. Charts naming the colors are often put near the paints. If supplies are placed where children may use them independently, labels will be of help in putting materials back. Such labelling is purposeful. In the beginning children will not know exactly what the words say, but they can be helped to realize that the words are put there to give them needed information.

The first word that a child learns to read is often his own name. Teachers sometimes object to labelling special equipment. Children need to learn to share; it is not always wise to build the idea that a child can lay claim to classroom equipment because his name is on it. However, there are many other ways in which names can be used. Classroom responsibilities for the week can be listed on a helpers' chart. Lists of those whose turns are to be next can be posted for certain activities where numbers are restricted. Children's names can be written on the pictures they have drawn or on other work which is to be saved. News events and captions to pictures can often feature names. When names are used in these ways a dual purpose is served. Children begin to look for similarities and differences among words as they learn to recognize their names. At the same time their interest is stimulated in learning to read the notice in which their names appear.

Be alert to opportunities to read beyond the immediate classroom. The printed notices in the child's world beyond the classroom provide other opportunities to convince him that it is important to learn to read. Street signs and traffic signs, names of stores, and route signs on busses are all useful in developing interest in words. In the school there are other signs a child needs to learn. *Boys* and *Girls* help him tell the washrooms apart. *In* and *Out*, *Up* and *Down*, help him to tell which door and which stairway he is to use. *Lunchroom*, *Library*, *Principal*, *Janitor*, help him to find his way around the building. Sometimes the children themselves will ask about the signs. Sometimes the teacher will point them out. At times a picture that shows a highway sign, a street sign, or the name of a store will lead to discussion of other signs with which the children are familiar.

Make sure that classroom materials are actually used. Classrooms should not be overcrowded with stimulations to read. Materials should be fresh. Some use should be made of them after they are

posted. When they have served their purpose they should be replaced. Stories or records of experiences that children may want to reread may be stored or clipped together to form a large reading book.

Teachers can judge the effectiveness of their use of classroom reading materials in part by the degree of interest shown by the children. If they ask about new signs, suggest new records, or ask to reread earlier ones, the material is effective. When the children seem oblivious to the printed matter that surrounds them or seldom appear to have much need for it, the material and the way it is being used need to be re-examined.

Because purposeful reading is important, few teachers try to label every common article in the room. The word *chair* pasted on the teacher's chair, or *desk* on her desk, has little to offer to the child at the prereading level. There is no reason why he should try to read such labels, as they tell him nothing new. Later, when children have begun to read independently and are anxious to learn new words, one type of word recognition activity may be to see how many labels can be matched correctly with objects in the room. However, the purpose for the activity at this time is entirely different.

Developing the Ability to Make Gross Discriminations in Word Forms

Capitalize on the opportunities offered through classroom reading-matter. At the prereading level, the objective of activities designed to help develop the ability to distinguish between words is to secure interest in the configurations of words and to build some general techniques for telling words apart. Prereading experiences have served their purpose if a beginner becomes interested in the shapes of words, begins to point out the same word when it appears again, even if he is not positive what it says, begins to identify similar beginnings or endings in words written near each other, reacts to the length of a word or to some unusual characteristic of its configuration, or makes other discoveries indicating that he is becoming aware of similarities and differences in the shapes of words. The children who acquire this skill quickly and who begin to recognize a number of words when they meet them again are ready for beginning-reading activities.

Activities that build ability to discriminate among the configurations of words are largely informal. As children work with books, experience records, and signs there are many opportunities to direct their attention to the shapes of words. As the teacher writes from the children's dictation she has opportunities to comment on particular

words. "This one begins with a tall letter, doesn't it?" "Can anyone tell me whose name looks something like this?" "We want to begin our next line just like the first one, so we will write exactly the same words again." "That's a long word, isn't it? See how much space it takes up. Say it, and see how long it sounds." "This is just a little word; we'll have room for it right here at the end." Teachers do not, of course, try to say something about the configuration of every new word. Children cannot respond to more than a few comparisons at any one time.

Many children soon follow the teacher's lead and make their own discoveries about the configurations of words. They may begin to point out where the same phrase appears again, to comment on the length or the shape of the word, or to talk about the similarity between two words. These insights can be picked up and discussed. Certain of the materials around the room may lend themselves to such discoveries. *Bulletin Board*, for example, has two words each beginning with the same capital letter. *Birthdays* is a long word with a clear configuration. Even though no particular effort is made to repeat words or phrases for the purposes of independent word recognition, the same phrase often recurs in the normal course of composing an experience record. A series of sentences, for example, may begin with *We went*, or *We saw*. Such repetition is helpful.

Activities calling for discrimination among words can be developed by using children's names. When a child finds his name on a list he can be asked how he knew it, what made it different from some of the others, or how many other names he knows. Teachers often construct their helpers' charts so that name cards can be inserted in slits and changed from week to week. The slips of cardboard upon which the names are printed may serve as flash cards for a little informal practice. "Who can find his name when it is held up?" 'Who knows whose name is being held up?' "How could we be sure to tell these two names apart?"

The use of manuscript writing or print helps to make similarities and differences among words as clear as possible. At the prereading stage, no particular effort need be made to assure that a child can recognize a letter in both capital and lower-case forms. However, there seems to be no reason for avoiding the use of either form. Children are going to meet words that use both capitals and lower-case letters in their reading a little later, and their preliminary contacts with words should give them the same type of experience. But,

for purposes of helping children discover similarities and differences in configuration, capitals may, at first, be compared with capitals and lower-case with lower-case. The child may, for the time being, be quite right in contending that *Baby* at the beginning of a sentence, and *baby* in the middle do not look alike. Later he will recognize the word in both forms, and will learn that there are two ways of writing the letter *B*. Such distinctions are made more easily when a child can read the word. They do not have to be stressed in prereading experience unless a child himself asks about them.

Look for appropriate opportunities to point to individual letters. At times children can be helped to identify individual letters. There is no particular need, at the prereading level, for a child to be able to name all the letters, and no need at all to know them in alphabetical order. Children will acquire this knowledge rapidy enough as they begin to read independently and start to use letter names as an aid to word recognition. Work with letters at the prereading level is mainly a matter of giving children another way of distinguishing among the shapes of words. Alphabet books will arouse interest in beginning letters. Children may come to school with initialled handkerchiefs or other objects. Often, instead of signing their complete names to work being saved for them, children initial it. All such occasions provide opportunities to talk about letters, their shapes, and why particular letters are chosen to serve various purposes. Other discoveries regarding letters will come as children begin to try to see differences between words. If *Betty* and *Bobby* happen to be written under each other on a bulletin-board announcement, someone may point out that they begin or end alike. Certain children may even comment on the difference between the double letters in the middle. Experiences in making such distinctions provide useful background when the child faces the task of telling words apart in his preprimer or other beginning materials.

Choose special practice activities with care. Certain children will find any sort of comparison between words difficult. While others are rapidly becoming able not only to point to differences in configurations, but even to recognize certain words independently, a few will not respond to the most obvious distinctions. Some children will not, for example, even be able to recognize that some phrases are several words longer than others. These youngsters need more time to mature, and many more informal contacts with printed matter. They may also benefit from special practice activities.

Special practice activities to develop ability to identify similarities and differences among words have to be chosen with care. Learning tends to be specific. Among the exercises common in reading-readiness workbooks are those where children are asked to tell when the pictures of two houses or of two trees are alike, or to pick out the one drawing in a series of four that is not like the others. Questions can be raised as to whether such exercises alone will assure skill in the much finer discriminations needed to tell *John* from *Jane* on a helpers' chart, or *ride* from *rides* in a preprimer. If such exercises are used, they should be accompanied by discussions where children can be helped to think about how to tell similar objects apart. When a series of perfect papers indicates that a group is having little difficulty discriminating among gross picture forms, it is safe to assume that more exercises with this type of material, even though the discriminations are somewhat finer, are not going to yield much further growth.

If activities calling for picture discrimination are used with immature children, they need to be followed by others where the discrimination must be made among words. Work-type activities can be found in reading-readiness workbooks, or hectographed by the teacher. The child may be asked to pick out the one word that is different in a line of four; to draw a line between the two similar words in a set of four, or to underline a key word whenever it appears on a list. Such activities have one major disadvantage. They tend to require little or no attention to the meaning of the words. Other types of activities use pictures in various ways along with the words so that the child must think about the meaning of the word while he is hunting for another that matches it. He may, for example, look at a picture of a ball, with the word *ball* under it, and then look for the word again in a set of four words, or sort word cards, placing each word under its correct picture. One of the distinct advantages of many of the informal classroom experiences with the shapes of words lies in the fact that the child is called upon to think about the message the word has for him while he studies how it looks.

Developing Skills in Discriminating Among the Sounds of Words

Call attention to interesting sound elements in the course of daily experiences with words. Work with sounds at the prereading level does not concern itself with helping children attach specific sounds to exact letter combinations. The aim is to build ability to listen to

words with discrimination as the teacher says, "They begin the same way. Listen to them and see if you can hear how they begin." "This one ends in the same sound as a word you know." Or, "Say it and hear how long it is." Such discriminations are the beginning of phonetic analysis. Activities with the sounds of words, like activities with their configurations, continue long beyond the prereading level.

Comments on the shapes of words often can lead to comments on their sounds. When children discover that two words begin alike, it is a logical step to ask them to say the words to see if they sound the same. Discoveries of common endings can be treated in a similar fashion. So can occasions when children point out that two words are somewhat alike in general shape but have none of the same letters. At the prereading level, the teacher will be the one who reads the words. Later, as children begin to read independently, they, themselves, will be able to read the words and often will identify new sound elements by comparing words they know.

Stories read to children or records they are helping to write offer other opportunities to develop their sensitivity to sounds. For example, the group may be helped to see that the words *drip, drip* describe today's quiet rain, while *bang, crash, roar* do better for yesterday's thunderstorm. Unusual words that add color or humor to a story can be commented upon. Children may also enjoy making up names with unusual sounds for stories they wish to tell or to write. *Mr. Bow-wow-wow-wow* may become the hero of a dog story, *Miss Hoppety-hop* and baby *Bunny-bun* the rabbits in another tale.

Make use of poetry and rhymes. Poetry offers a fruitful avenue for work with sounds. Finger plays, nursery rhymes, songs, and simple poems written for young children provide many opportunities for this type of experience. A group activity of repeating a favorite poem helps a child to sense meter and rhyme. At other times the teacher may take the lead in saying all but the last word and allow the children to fill in the rhyme. Some of the most charming poems for children and some of their own most truly poetic efforts are unrhymed. Care needs to be taken to make sure that the prereading need to be able to identify common endings does not result in an overstress on rhymes and marked rhythms that is detrimental to creative expression.

Provide special practice in meaningful settings. Some children will find it difficult to hear sound elements in words. If special prac-

tice activities seem desirable, they should, as far as possible, be in a meaningful and interesting setting. Activities such as listening for the different word in a set of four spoken by the teacher or telling whether two words spoken by the teacher are the same or different may help children to listen carefully, but they do little to encourage them to think about the meaning of the words they are hearing. Completing a two-line couplet or filling in the missing words in a poem read by the teacher provides a more meaningful setting.

Activities with word beginnings can be developed by games such as "I spy." The teacher, or a child as leader, says, "I spy something whose name begins like *paper*" and the children guess the correct word. Such activities must be kept very simple at first. Children at the prereading level cannot spell. The child who says that *city* and *sunny* begin the same way is correct, as far as sounds are concerned. Before children begin to read, such answers need to be accepted. However, if the teacher ever has cause to write such answers on the board she will need to point to the differences in configuration.

Prereading workbooks offer many experiences with sounds through picture activities. Children are asked to find the pictured object whose name ends like the one given at the beginning of the row; to find the object that begins with the same sound as the one pictured at the beginning of the row; to mark all the pictures of objects that begin or end alike in a given row, to mark which of a series of pairs of pictured objects begin or end alike. Teachers can build similar exercises by pasting on cardboard pictures clipped from magazines. These activities can be particularly valuable because they can be used to develop new concepts for some children while they provide experience with sounds.

Teachers should be on the alert for speech difficulties or hearing losses when activities involving sounds are undertaken. A child may fail to discriminate between *feather* and *weather* because he can not hear the difference in the sounds or because he himself has not been saying the sounds correctly. Speech difficulties are often readily apparent, and experiences in naming words that begin or end in given sounds may be helpful in correcting poor habits. Hearing losses may not be so easy to identify, especially if the child has more difficulty hearing some sounds than he has with others. Marked inability to respond to sounds should always suggest a test of hearing. If a hearing loss is discovered, special adjustments may have to be made. If no

trouble with hearing is reported, the task then becomes one of providing enough experience to help the child learn to make the discriminations that now cause him trouble.

Developing Skill in Picture Interpretation

Make use of the opportunities in the typical classroom setting. Experiences in interpreting pictures not only provide an important aid to interpreting primer and first-reader stories, but they also contribute to the development of language ability and serve to widen experience background. Pictures are used in many ways on the bulletin boards of a typical primary classroom. These picture displays need to be used. Skill in picture interpretation grows when there is a reason for examining a picture, just as reading ability develops when the printed materials around the room serve a purpose.

Children's books today are replete with pictures. These can be discussed as a story is read to the class. Children also can be helped to use the pictures in a reference book as a source of information even if they cannot read the words. After a trip to the zoo, for example, they may turn to a book of animal pictures to answer certain questions. Sometimes the teacher may read the accompanying text. At other times the picture itself may provide the needed information. Through such experiences children learn to look carefully at a picture in order to follow a story or to answer a question. "What do you suppose he will do next?" "Now do you see why everybody laughed?" How big does it seem to be?" 'How many see now what color it should be?"

Use pictures as an aid to interpreting experience records. Pictures can be used to give clues to class records. Often a helpers' chart has a picture of the housekeeping responsibility beside the word. A picture of a child painting may be posted near the list that indicates whose turn it is to work at the easel. Children may draw small pictures to illustrate each line in an experience record. Once in a while pictures may even be substituted for key words. As teachers work with these illustrated records they can help children learn how to use the pictures for meaning. "What is your job this week? Look at the picture, it will tell you." "Who can find the line that says we saw the ducks in the park? Do you remember the picture we put beside it?" "Who can find the place on the bulletin board where we list our birthdays? Look to see if there are any names there."

Capitalize on the pictures drawn by children. The pictures that children themselves draw offer other opportunities for experiences with picture interpretation. Children do not always want to tell a story about their pictures, nor should they feel that every picture must have a caption. Freedom to be creative is important in artistic expression and this freedom should not be jeopardized because of the prereading need to develop skill in picture interpretation. However, many children will volunteer to tell about what they have drawn. In addition, there are opportunities to draw special illustrations. Children may make pictures of their homes or their pets. They may illustrate a story or draw pictures of what they saw on an excursion. These pictures can be used for many interesting bulletin-board displays and the resulting discussions can lead to considerable increased skill in picture interpretation.

Provide practice to meet specific needs. Special practice in interpreting pictures should not be needed often in the classroom settings that have been described. However, it may be helpful occasionally to have all the children in a small group talk about the same picture. It may also be helpful to provide experience in following a story in a picture sequence. Commercially-prepared prereading materials offer useful activities for such purposes. They are replete with many types of pictures that can be used flexibly for a variety of group discussions.

Pictures can be used for a number of exercises for independent work periods. The sequential picture stories that can be read from left to right and from top to bottom of the page are among the activities included in most prereading books that may be particularly helpful. These stories have already been discussed as a source of language experiences. Work-type activities can be developed by cutting apart a set of picture sequences and asking the children to put the pictures in their correct order. Workbook activities with rhymes have been mentioned as another type of exercise that makes use of pictures. Games calling for picture interpretation can be made by pasting on separate cards small pictures of flowers, animals, birds, or canned goods clipped from advertisements in magazines, and asking children to sort them into appropriate groups. The picture interpretation skill, in this case, lies in identifying the classification to which the picture belongs. Time needs to be allowed for talk about such seat-work activities. With picture interpretation, as with

experiences designed to develop other prereading skills, merely doing a practice exercise without discussing it reduces considerably the value of the activity.

Developing Skill in Handling Books

Demonstrate how to handle books while they are used in regular classroom activities. Many of the skills needed to handle books are learned as children begin to use them regularly in beginning-reading activities. However, teachers often devote some time at the prereading level to helping children gain a little preliminary experience with turning pages, starting at the front of a book, and holding a book properly. They also plan rather carefully to help children learn to look at reading materials in a left-to-right direction.

Children can be shown how to handle a book properly in almost any situation in which a book is used. A teacher can demonstrate as she reads to the group. She may point to the title, ask children to show where she should begin to read, show how she turns the pages in order, and display the pictures one at a time in proper sequence. When children bring books from home they can be helped to handle them properly while showing them to the class. A few minutes' discussion before a child takes his turn will help him to point to the title on the cover of his book and to turn the pages properly as he shows the pictures.

Children's first independent contacts with books at school are with the ones on the library table. Here is another opportunity to talk about how to handle books. The necessity for clean hands, for not throwing books or snatching them, for leaving pictures unmarked, and for not folding pages can all be talked through. Children can demonstrate how to sit so that a book is held comfortably and how to turn the pages so that they will not be torn. Appointing librarians who help to care for the books and coming to agreements as to how many children can be at the library table at once and under what conditions books can be taken to other tables also help to arouse a feeling of responsibility for the proper care of books.

Use classroom experiences to demonstrate left-to-right orientation. Until they come to school, few children will have been in situations where the order in which they look at materials makes a difference. One does not examine a pet from left to right, or look over a new toy in any special direction, or start at the left side of a picture. Only as children begin to read and to write does it matter where they start

and in which direction they work. As they first enter upon these new activities most children will, from time to time, look in the wrong direction and write a letter or a word in mirror writing or read a word in reverse. Some will continue to have difficulty in being consistent in directional orientation for many months.

At the prereading level the experiences that build left-to-right orientation are largely informal. As the teacher writes while the children look on, and as she reads to them, she will have opportunities to say, "Where shall I begin?" "We begin at this side and up here at the top." "Where is our first line?" Often she can move her hand under the words she is reading to indicate direction, or point to the beginning of a new line. Care needs to be taken, however, to keep these gestures from becoming meaningless. Children need to be conscious of problems of directional orientation while the teacher points.

A certain number of writing activities may precede beginning-reading experiences. Children may be copying their own names or initialling their pictures. These first writing experiences need to be carefully supervised. Even in adding their initials to a picture, children may need to be taught which letter to put first and how to form the letters properly. The straight lines and circles of manuscript writing have greatly simplified the problems of learning to write, but care needs to be taken to make sure that left-to-right direction is followed consistently. The order in which the strokes are made in such letters as *b* and *d*, *p* and *q* is easily reversed.

Activities that teach the terms *left* and *right* may facilitate the process of developing directional orientation. Teachers can find occasions to suggest that a child use his right or his left hand, or go to the right or left. "As we go around the mural let's go to the left so that we won't step on it." "We walk to the right in the hall and on the street." Needed objects may be described as located to the right or the left of the teacher's desk. Singing games, such as *Looby-Lou*, may be helpful. Even with help, all children at the prereading level will not learn to use *left* and *right* correctly. Adults, too, on occasion, have difficulty in keeping their directions clear.

Provide special practice for the child who finds left-to-right orientation difficult. Many children will develop a sense of left-to-right orientation in the course of the regular classroom activities that have just been described. For those who seem to have unusual difficulty, special practice may be in order. Reading-readiness workbooks

contain a number of activities. Others can be prepared readily by the teacher.

In providing practice activities to develop directional orientation, care needs to be taken to be sure that the child is practicing the skill he really needs. Questions can be raised as to the effectiveness of such exercises as tracing a dotted line from left to right to complete a picture, since this is not what the child will be called upon to do when he reads or writes. Picture stories, in which the child follows a series of pictures from left to right and from top to bottom of a page in a workbook, call for skill more nearly akin to what he will need when he reads. Another type of practice activity can be developed by cutting apart such story strips, or by mounting pictures from appropriate comic-book-type advertising strips on separate pieces of cardboard and asking the child to rearrange the pictures in order. Some teachers keep sets of such materials for independent work periods. Work-type activities in which the child first looks at the key picture at the left of a line and then looks across the line to find a picture that rhymes or begins with the same sound can also be used for directional orientation. With all these exercises time needs to be taken to discuss the children's work. Very few seat-work activities make their full contribution unless there is an opportunity for teacher and children to think about them together.

Give the left-handed child a good start. Recommendations for working with the child who shows a preference for his left hand have followed a pendulum-like course. At one time it was the custom to require all children to change to the right hand. Then it was recommended that a child who showed any preference whatsoever for his left hand should not, under any circumstances, be encouraged to use his right. Many aspects of the problem of handedness are in need of further research. However, there is some evidence to support the suggestion that, if there seems to be no decided preference and a child seems under no strain when he is asked to try to use his right hand in such activities as drawing, writing, or cutting, it is often desirable to give him a little encouragement to develop right-handed skills.[2] This is particularly true in activities such as writing, handling a knife and fork, and cutting, in which the left-handed person often finds that the world does not take his particular preference into account. However, it seems unwise to insist that

2 Arthur T. Jersild, *Child Psychology*. Fourth Edition, pp. 170-176. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954.

the child try to use his right hand if he appears at all unhappy about it, and it is important to help him develop consistent handedness in writing.

It is not always easy to identify the left-handed child. While some children show a definite preference in all activities, others may seem to use either hand interchangeably, and a few may even have been required by parents to use the right hand when they prefer the left. Any activity in which one hand is used may offer clues. Which hand does the child prefer when picking up an object which he has dropped? He may catch a ball with two hands, but with which hand does he throw it? If he is offered a pencil held so that it is within easy reach of either hand, which one does he tend to use? In an activity other than writing which demands considerable dexterity, which hand does he prefer?

It is at the prereading level, as children first begin to handle equipment, that special care needs to be taken to help those who are left-handed. If they are not watched, these children will follow the leads of their right-handed friends. This means that, as he begins to write, the left-handed child may try to tilt his paper in the direction which is more comfortable for one who is right-handed. Scissors may prove difficult for him. He may try to sew in the same direction as the child next to him and have trouble. Special help when such skills as these are first being learned will pay rich rewards later.

The available research does not clearly support the thesis that the left-handed child will necessarily have any more difficulty in establishing left-to-right orientation in reading and writing than will a child who is right-handed.[3] The same general help needs to be given to establish a sense of directional orientation, and the same care taken to give special practice if there seems to be unusual difficulty.

USING READING-READINESS BOOKS

Possibilities for supplementing classroom experiences with exercises from commercially-prepared reading-readiness books have been suggested at several points in the preceding section. Practically all basal-reader series provide these prereading materials. Typically they are in workbook form, although children do not necessarily have to mark or cut the books in order to work with them. Many of the exercises they contain are developed around pictures. Activities to

[3] Arthur I. Gates, *The Improvement of Reading*. Third Edition, pp. 303-313. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947.

build experience background are provided through pictures of home, school, and community life; of animals; and of children at work and at play. Picture stories give experience in following left-to-right sequence. Rows of pictures are used to give children an opportunity to find rhymes, to find words beginning with the same sound, to identify similarities and differences in configurations, and to match colors. Words are introduced through printed directions, in captions to pictures, and in single-sentence stories accompanying picture sequences. Sometimes a set of pictures is designed to introduce the vocabulary of the first preprimer of the given series. A certain amount of tracing and simple manuscript writing may also be included. Many types of language experiences are possible as the children discuss the various activities in these workbooks. It is also easy to give experiences in caring for books, in finding given pages, and in working from left to right. Reading-readiness workbooks, used wisely, can play an important part in the prereading program.

Evaluate reading-readiness materials in the light of the total prereading program. Reading-readiness books are not intended to supply all the child's prereading experiences, nor do they offer a magic gateway to sure success in beginning-reading activities. They provide planned practice exercises that call for the child to utilize the same prereading skills that he is using many times a day in the normal course of activities in the typical primary classroom.

A first step, then, in deciding whether to use a reading-readiness book is to consider how effectively the total primary program is already meeting children's prereading needs. Do they have many opportunities to listen to stories, to respond to printed signs and notices, to share in the construction of group experience stories, to enjoy a variety of experiences with rhymes, and to interpret pictures? If children demonstrate in many ways that they are becoming alert to words, their messages, their shapes, and their sounds, reading-readiness books may not have much to add. However, if, in any of these areas, there seems to be a need for more experience, the reading-readiness workbook offers another source of colorful, interesting practice.

In deciding whether to use reading-readiness books, teachers also need to consider their plans for beginning reading. Although many teachers feel no need to give children advance experience with the words or the characters they will meet in a preprimer, some find the transition to beginning reading more smooth if these initial

contacts have been made. When this is the case, judicious use of parts of the readiness workbook of the series that is to be used for beginning reading helps to provide background.

Select readiness activities to meet special needs. Children do not all require the same amount or the same kind of prereading experiences. When an entire class is taken through a prereading book page by page, there is great danger that time will be wasted for some children for whom such activities are too easy. On the other hand, it is equally likely that such a plan will fail to meet the special needs of others. Reading-readiness workbooks are best used when activities are selected in terms of the specific needs of individuals or of small groups. The fact that a child may enjoy the simple coloring or picture interpretation exercises provided in these materials offers no valid argument for giving him an overdose of such activities if he is ready to profit from more challenging reading experiences.

Because reading-readiness workbooks are planned so that more complicated forms of the same activity recur at different points, it is possible to select a graded series of activities for children with special needs. For example, the children who seem to have the most difficulty interpreting pictures may work with a variety of picture stories. Those for whom rhyming is difficult may engage in the activities that stress sounds. Some of these exercises can be assigned for independent work periods. Others may be scheduled for group sessions. These groups can meet with the teacher while other members of the class go about various types of independent work. When they are used in this way, readiness workbooks can serve to provide practice activities that could be developed by the teacher only after many hours of work.

If reading-readiness workbooks are used selectively with small groups, there is rarely need to purchase more than ten to a dozen copies of a single book. Sometimes it is helpful to collect sets of workbooks from two or three basal-reader series. This expands the variety of practice activities available. It also makes it possible to extend the prereading program for children with special needs without obviously reviewing materials that other groups have already covered.

Use reading-readiness books to provide occasional group experiences. When a classroom is equipped with sets of ten or twelve reading-readiness workbooks, it is possible to give the children some useful group experiences in working with books. Working with

experience records or listening to the teacher read a story do not give quite the same experience as having a book in one's own hand, turning the pages oneself, and looking at the same page that others are also studying. This is another type of contribution to the prereading program that can be made by a readiness book.

The picture interpretation exercises in readiness workbooks are often particularly useful for the purposes of group discussion. The little picture-sequence stories that have already been mentioned can be helpful in developing skill in following the gist of a story. In such group discussions, the children can learn to take turns, to follow the discussion, and to keep their place in the book. They can also be taught how to hold their books and how to turn pages carefully. These are useful experiences that can send children to their first work with preprimers better prepared as group members.

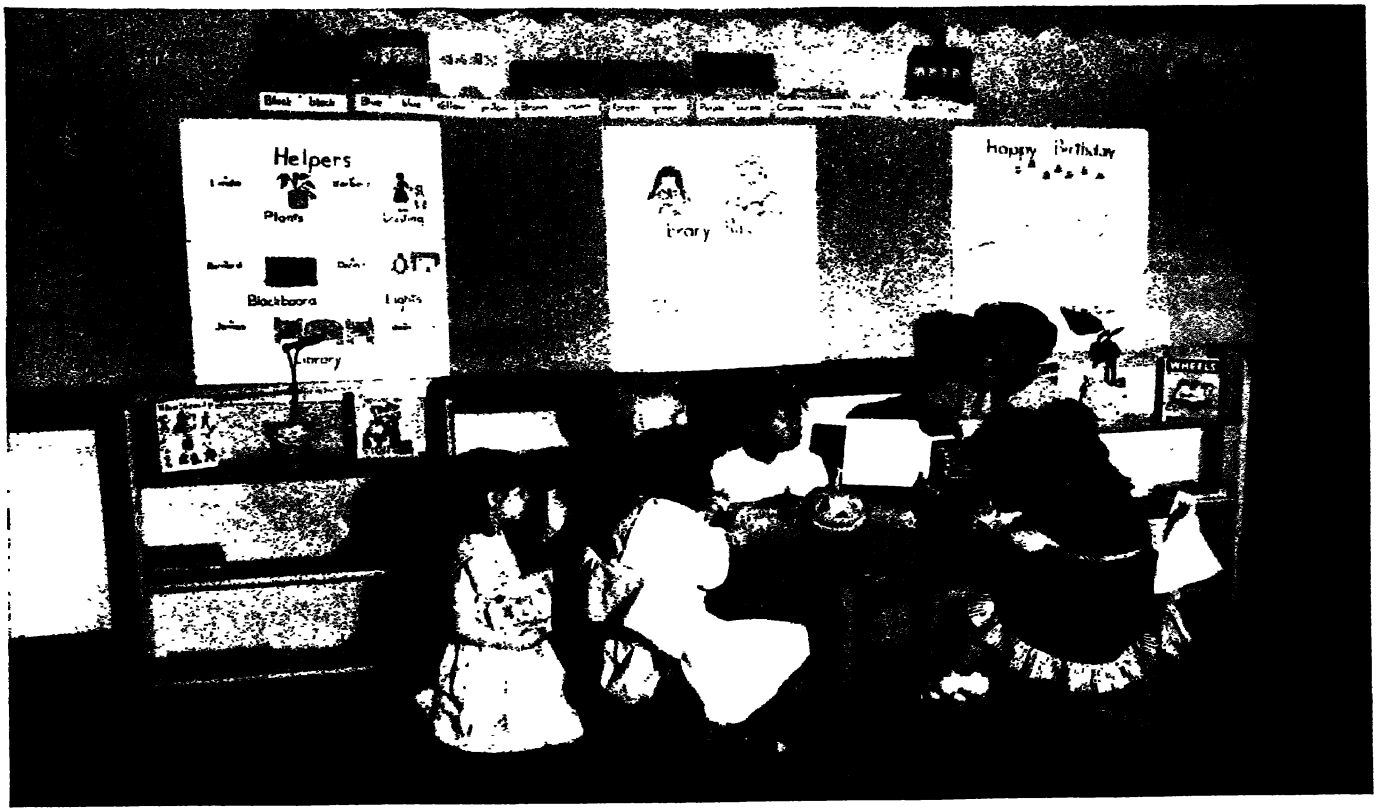
Use readiness books to extend the prereading program for children who progress slowly. Perhaps one of the most important contributions of a reading-readiness book is made to the children who are in need of extended prereading experiences. These youngsters often feel school and community pressures to begin to read, and they may be unhappy if they are not working with a book when others are reading preprimers and primers. Although the normal activities of the primary program may actually be meeting the prereading needs of these children, it may be very helpful, from the point of good morale, to plan for definite group experiences with a reading-readiness book. It may also be valuable to these children to have the additional planned practice that these booklets provide.

Even when children are using a reading-readiness book for group work on a daily basis, it is still helpful to be selective in the activities used. Teachers sometimes hesitate to vary the order in which they use work-type materials lest they lose the values inherent in the sequence of the materials. At the prereading level this danger is slight. Many other experiences are also contributing to the child's prereading skills, and his work with a prereading book is most effective when it is planned in the light of them. Sometimes it is helpful to vary considerably from the original purpose of an exercise. Children whose oral expression is limited, for example, may be encouraged to discuss the pictures in a readiness book in great detail. They may even go on to tell their own stories about the picture, or to dictate a group story for an experience chart. Reading-readiness books, used to best advantage, supplement and contribute to the



N N rnal v

Firsthand experience is important for reading readiness Cow re only one of the discoveries made by these kindergarten children on their trip to the farm (Courtesy of The University School Indiana University)



D. Arthur Bricker

Love of good books begins at the prereading level. Long before you are able to read the story, it's exciting to read the picture. (Courtesy of the Cincinnati Public Schools.)

total prereading program. They should not dictate the contents or the sequence of the program, either for a single child or for a group.

VARYING THE PREREADING PROGRAM TO MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

How extensive should the prereading program be? How soon should children be encouraged to try to read independently? What adjustments can be made for the child who is immature, for the youngster who has difficulty making adequate social or emotional adjustments, for the child with a physical handicap? No teacher is ever completely satisfied with her efforts to meet the needs of individual children. However, the type of primary program that has been described offers a number of opportunities to adjust to special problems.

Capitalize on the informality and flexibility of the program to meet individual needs. The informality and flexibility of the primary program outlined earlier can be used to advantage in meeting individual needs. First, there is general emphasis on helping children learn to work independently. This means that the teacher has more freedom to work with individuals or with small groups. Second, the day's program is planned to allow for some individualized activities. These independent work periods can be used to meet the needs of the child who is interested in the books on the library table, of the child with special talent in art, and of the youngster who needs the social contacts that accompany playing with a group in the play corner or helping with a construction project. Third, unit activities are flexibly organized, so that a child may share in the part of the project best suited to his capacities and needs or may be steered into a group with whom he can work effectively. Here, too, is a time when the teacher is usually free to work with individuals and small groups. All points in the program that allow for a choice of activities or free the teacher to work with a few children at a time give opportunities to meet special needs. This informal setting provides an unusually good opportunity to give some help to children for whom school represents a difficult social or emotional adjustment.

In a flexible program, children with physical handicaps also can more readily find a place. It is not unduly difficult to seat a youngster with a visual handicap or a hearing loss in a front row when the class assembles. A youngster who should not be trying to make fine visual discriminations can be encouraged to join in varied activities

in which reading does not play a part. When he does read, he may work with the large print of experience records. Independent work periods may provide time for the teacher to give a little special help to the child who is handicapped in vision, hearing, or speech. It is also possible to plan individualized activities for such children without calling undue attention to their handicaps when all children are engaged in a certain amount of independent work.

A child who has been ill can be drawn back into activities gradually. It is often possible to assign one or two children to tell the absentee about the experiences he missed. Usually there are projects in relation to a unit at stages in which he can join without disturbing unduly the plans of the group. In a class discussion centering around new experience records, he can be the listener until he becomes reoriented. If special readiness practice activities are being used, he may join one of the groups working with simpler materials for a few days until he begins to feel at home again.

The immature child in the classroom raises other problems. He may tire a little more quickly than his classmates, find it more difficult to sit still for long, lose interest in a project sooner, find pencils and scissors harder to handle, and prefer active experiences and playthings that can be manipulated without much fine muscular coordination. During group discussions, these children may be allowed a little more freedom in the amount of wiggling and stretching they do. Sometimes it may be desirable to have them make their contribution early in a planning session and then to free them to go on with other activities while more mature children wait their turns. If the immature child has difficulty in handling crayons, paint brushes, or scissors, he will need to be given special help. All such adjustments increase the variety and number of demands being made upon the teacher. However, the help provided at the prereading period will often save a child from much frustration and discouragement in succeeding grades.

Start beginning-reading activities as children demonstrate ability to profit from them. In planning for beginning-reading activities, most primary teachers set up reading groups consisting of children with approximately the same level of same ability. In Chapter III a number of suggestions were made of ways of using prereading activities to identify children who seem likely to work well together and who demonstrate the skill needed for successful beginning-reading experiences. Appraisals can be made as children go about regular

classroom activities. Skill in handling work-type materials can be noted. To these observations can be added evidence from reading-readiness tests. In a classroom where there is flexible grouping for many types of activities, it is usually possible to experiment with beginning groups without having children feel that they are being demoted if they are shifted from one group to another. Some teachers try out tentative groupings as they work with experience records so that shifts can be made before the children are given their first preprimers. Out of all this experimentation, based on careful study of children, come the first reading groups.

Ideally, everyone in the class will not start to work in a reading group at the same time. As children demonstrate that they will benefit from beginning-reading instruction, room for this activity is found in the day's program. Meanwhile, those who still need pre-reading experiences go about the many other activities provided in the day's program. They work in various aspects of unit activities, participate in language experiences, use various media for creative expression, engage in dramatic play, and help to write and to illustrate experience records. In these activities, they are encouraged to work as independently with familiar words, phrases, and sentences as they are able. Whenever it seems likely that more children can profit from beginning-reading activities, a new group is set up.

The problem of the school or the community where it is the policy to set up reading groups for all children in the early fall was discussed in the preceding section. At that time the possibilities for using reading readiness workbooks for the least mature children were described. It is also possible to enrich first experiences with a preprimer so that it, too, contributes largely to typical prereading skills. However, in such situations, it is important to take steps to assure that the potentially rich contributions of the primary program both to a child's growth in reading skill and to his total development are not sacrificed for the sake of extended contacts with these simple reading books.

To extend the primary program gradually until it includes three or more reading groups and still to provide a wide variety of other experiences of equal educational value is no easy matter. It calls for skillful scheduling and for effective planning of group and individual activities. More detailed suggestions as to how this may be accomplished are given in Chapter V for the beginning-reading period, and in Chapter VI, for the later primary program.

The success of the prereading program in the first grade depends, to a great extent, on the coordination of the reading program from grade to grade. All children will not gain in reading skill at the same pace, in spite of the best efforts of the most skillful teacher. Prereading activities cannot be prolonged effectively to make a child's first experiences with independent reading successful and happy if second-grade teachers are not prepared to take these same youngsters where they are, and to provide activities adjusted to their reading level. Such children do not necessarily lose a year because they start to read a little more slowly. Many of them will have caught up with their classmates by the time they have entered the third or fourth grades if teachers at each level have consistently provided activities suited to their reading needs.

Consider the possibility of prereading classes. In most small schools, adjustments for children who need extended prereading experiences will have to be made within the individual classroom. In large schools, there are sometimes enough immature children to allow the establishment of a junior primary or prereading class. The youngsters in such a class sometimes may engage in prereading activities for much of the first year.

When a prereading class is established, the children should not be selected on the basis of their prereading abilities alone. The informal activities of the prereading classroom have an important contribution to make to the child who, for any reason, is not ready for the regular first-grade program. This may include the child whose experience background is limited, the one whose health has not been good, and the one who has moved about from place to place and does not possess the skills needed to work and play happily with other children.

The activities planned for a prereading class are very similar to those discussed earlier in this chapter. There are many stimulations to read but there are not necessarily reading groups. However, in many such classes some beginning-reading activities are undertaken before the end of the year. Activities to enrich experience background, many language experiences, many opportunities to work informally with reading matter, many kinds of creative work, time to learn how to work and play with other children are all part of the program.

It is important that the numbers of children in a prereading class be kept at a reasonable size. One of the main purposes of such classes

is to provide for more individual help, and this is not possible if the group is at maximum size. Materials should be generously supplied, many opportunities for firsthand experiences given, and provision made for adequate records.

It is a mistake to consider a prereading class as a year inserted before the first grade, or between the first grade and the second. In the normal course of events, the children will go into a modified second-grade program. Some are likely to be youngsters whose general level of intellectual ability and maturity will make it desirable for them eventually to work with children who are a year younger than themselves. Others, in third or fourth grade, will join again those who have followed a more typical path. Some will even make great strides toward learning to read by the end of the first year, and will fit easily into a regular second grade.

Parents need to be taken into the plans when adjustments in the reading program are made. They need to understand why the adjustment is being recommended and how it can help their child. It is particularly important that parents, and sometimes teachers, be reassured about the child's eventual ability to learn to read successfully. Sometimes they will need to be convinced that the child is not necessarily losing a year of school or helped to understand the advantages of holding the child so that he can work with a younger group. Above all, parents need to be helped to see how to give the assistance at home which will supplement the school prereading program as effectively as possible. Because the problem of helping parents to understand the reading program is an important one for all teachers, suggestions of ways of working together and a list of books and pamphlets of particular interest to parents are given in Chapter XIII.

The success of any modification of a school program to allow for individual differences depends ultimately on an all school and community philosophy in which considered judgments about the needs and capacities of individual children and not arbitrary standards guide decisions. This does not make for a less challenging program or for lower standards. Rather, it enables teachers to take the steps needed to provide the most stimulating and the richest possible experiences for all children. In the field of reading there is ample evidence that some of the remedial problems of the upper grades arise from primary programs that were not adapted to the needs of individuals. Experienced teachers need to be freed to give the help

CHAPTER V

FIRST STEPS IN LEARNING TO READ

BEGINNERS START TO READ

In the early fall a visitor to the first grade described in the preceding chapter found books, charts, notices, and other reading matter serving many purposes in the classroom, but little independent reading on the part of the children. Some could find their own names. The children who were most advanced knew the general gist of the experience records in their classroom and were proud of their growing ability to discover the same words in several places on a record and to point out lines that began alike but they were not always sure exactly what the words or the lines said. Others showed less interest in reading activities and displayed less skill in making gross discriminations among the shapes and sounds of words.

What does a visitor to this same class find a few weeks later? Some children are still very immature in their approach to reading. Others, who are not yet actually reading, are much more active in their responses to the shapes and sounds of words and in their interest in stories, signs, and notices. Perhaps the most startling change has come about in the most advanced children. The activities of their reading group reveal the progress they have made.

Children are eager to read. The most advanced group is working with the second preprimer of a basal reader series. The children obviously look forward to their reading period. They find the right page for the new story, some using page numbers, others pictures. As they begin to talk, it is clear that they remember the gist of what they read the day before. The title of the new story is *Tuffy and Boots*[1] and the main characters are Boots, the puppy who was in the preceding preprimer, and Tuffy, who has just been introduced.

[1] Arthur I. Gates *et al.*, *Tuffy and Boots*, pp. 9–16. Second Basal Preprimer of the Macmillan Readers. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951. Copyright 1951 by The Macmillan Company.

The children discuss the picture of the two animals on the title page, recall what they read about Tuffy in the preceding story, and speculate on how well he will get along with Boots. From their own experiences with cats and dogs, they propose several possibilities. The teacher suggests that they turn the page and read the little three-line passage to find out. *Likes* is a new word, but the children have recently used *like* in an experience record. After a brief interval, hands go up to report that Tuffy likes Boots. The teacher asks what Tuffy might like to do. After the children have made a few suggestions they read the three-line passage on the next page to see if they are right. Then, to discover with whom Tuffy likes to play, they turn the page and read the five lines accompanying the picture. The teacher gives a little extra help to three children who are using markers. Some murmur to themselves but many do little vocalizing. Reading and discussing in this fashion, they finish the story.

A word-recognition vocabulary has begun to develop. It is apparent that the children can recognize a good many words at sight. They read the little two- to five-line passages that accompany each picture with relative ease. In all, the first preprimer of the series[2] introduced fourteen new words. In its sixty-four pages these words were repeated many times over. It is apparent, also, that new vocabulary has been added through classroom experience records.

Several types of approaches to new words can be noted. *Tuffy* was introduced in the preceding story. Today, to help the children recall its configuration, the teacher writes it on the board. The children also find it in the title of the story. *Likes* is figured out because the children have had experience with *like*. *With* is another new word. The teacher points out that there is a new word on the page, and asks who can find it. Since the sentence is *Tuffy likes to play —— Boots*, several are able to supply it without difficulty. On the next page *with* is repeated three times. *Said* is the fourth new word introduced in the story. Here the teacher encourages the children to use the picture to decide what is happening, and writes *said* on the board after they have decided that Sally is saying something to mother. In the last four pages of the story, the new words are re-used in various combinations. At the end of the period the teacher holds up the four new words on flash cards and the children take turns finding and reading aloud a line that contains each one.

Stories several lines in length are read with comprehension. These children can read several lines silently to answer a question. At the beginning of the story they read three lines to see if Tuffy likes Boots. When they are asked with whom Tuffy likes to play, they read five lines. They read the last two pages of the story without interruption Their comments indicate that they understand what they read. Oral reading is also used. It, too, is planned so that the children must think about what

[2] Arthur I. Gates *et al. Splash.* First Basal Pre-primer of the Macmillan Readers. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951.

they read. Typically it follows the silent reading of the passage and supplements it. As the children report that Tuffy likes to play with Ted and with Sally they read the lines that gave them the answers. At another point several take turns reading what Sally said. The children enjoy testing their skill in reading aloud, but they also enjoy discussing what they have just read silently and enriching the stories by commenting on the accompanying pictures.

These youngsters finished a twenty-two-line story during their reading period. They learned four new words. In all, their preprimers have introduced nineteen new words, but this is not the full extent of their vocabulary, as they have learned others from the materials about the room. They still look to the teacher to tell them most new words and they still need discussion to guide their reading, even when it covers only four or five lines. However, they are well on the way to independent reading, and they are very pleased with their ability to read stories for themselves.

What experiences brought these children to the point where they could read with such evident interest and such growing skill in using the context to identify the meaning of new words? What kinds of reading responsibilities did they take on first? How did they become able to recognize so many words with so few errors? What kinds of practice were provided for them and how much practice did they have? The first few weeks of reading instruction do not differ greatly in general procedure from those which follow, nor do they differ greatly from the prereading period which went before. Yet the start is crucial for later progress. How do teachers go about it? Because the transition from prereading to beginning reading represents a special problem for many first-grade teachers, this chapter spells out in detail the possibilities for materials, classroom organization, and group reading activities for these early weeks. The development of the first-grade reading program beyond the first weeks of beginning activities is included in the discussion of the primary program in Chapters VI through IX.

CHANGING AIMS AS READING BEGINS

New skills imply new objectives. At the prereading level teachers work for interest in the message conveyed by printed material, but expect that they, not the children, will assume the major responsibility for reading it accurately. They welcome children's growing ability to identify individual words correctly but their aim is to

develop general sensitivity to differences in configuration, not accurate word recognition. Now, as children reach the point where they are ready to take over more of the reading task, these aims change.

Responsibility for reading for meaning shifts from teacher to child. Getting meaning from what is read is a major objective, even at the prereading level, and it remains a major objective throughout the entire reading program. The first few weeks of reading instruction mark a gradual shift of responsibility for meaningful reading from teacher to child. At the prereading level the teacher is the one who reads the printed material while the children listen, discuss what is read, and occasionally identify lines, phrases, or words. Now, as they take definite steps toward independent reading, children must learn how to get meaning from the printed message for themselves. The materials that are the basis for the first independent reading are simple sentences, sometimes not more than two or three words in length, grouped into very short stories in a preprimer, or developed as experience records. Often the written material is supplemented by a picture which conveys the meaning almost as well as the words. Once words are introduced they are re-used frequently. After children have learned the first few words and phrases, theirs is the major responsibility for finding what subsequent stories are about. The teacher is there to help them figure it out—by assisting with words that are not remembered, by introducing unfamiliar words, and by asking questions to direct their reading—but she no longer reads the materials to them. The aim now is to help children develop ways of getting the meaning for themselves.

Sentence and phrase units begin to be identified accurately. Part of the skill of getting meaning without help lies in deciding exactly what each group of words says. At the prereading level this does not matter so much. If the first line of a class record reads *Yesterday we went to the store* and somebody remembers it as *The line that tells that we went to Mr. Jackson's store,* he is close enough. The teacher can read the line correctly if it is important. When children begin to read for themselves they must come closer to the exact wording.

The element that conveys a maximum of meaning is emphasized first. In the beginning, the unit is often a complete sentence. Children, in effect, "memorize" some of their first reading. They know that the story on the page that has the picture of the little boy running says *Run, Ted. Run! Run! Run!* and that the story that goes

with the picture of him jumping says *Jump, Ted. Jump! Jump! Jump!* [3] They may be able to tell the sentences apart when they are written on flash cards, or to identify them when they are asked to draw pictures to illustrate them, but they may not always be certain, in the beginning, which word is *Run,* which *Jump,* and which *Ted.* They may say *Run! Run! Run!* correctly without seeing immediately that the word must be written three times if they say it three times. Teacher and children work together to learn to recognize accurately sentence and phrase units. This is a second objective of the beginning-reading program.

Selected words become familiar friends. A child is not truly on the road to independent reading until he can recognize separate words in various combinations. Beginning-reading materials are written so that selected words recur. In preprimers, three or four words may make up the first few stories. Other words are added slowly and combined in various ways with those already familiar. For example, in the preprimer that has just been quoted, the children read such combinations as *Run, Sally; Ted! Ted!; Run, Boots, run; Run to Mother.* If experience records are used as the basis for beginning work, the total vocabulary load is likely to be more heavy. Here the teacher usually chooses certain words for special emphasis, while those that are not important remain temporarily as parts of larger phrase or sentence units. As selected words appear in different settings—now beginning a sentence and now ending it, now in the preprimer, now on a word or phrase card, and now in an experience story—children begin to recognize them accurately. Independent reading does not start with word drills. As the teacher gives the children the experience of actually reading short, interesting stories independently by recognizing phrase and sentence units, she looks for ways of sharpening their accurate recognition of individual words as rapidly as possible.

Books are handled efficiently. Prereading activities should help children to feel at home with books. During the first few weeks of reading instruction, those who are not already skillful in handling books are helped to become so. They are given time to examine their first books with care. They talk about how to hold them, how to keep them clean, and how to avoid tearing or bending pages. They

[3] The illustrations in this section are from Arthur I. Gates *et al., Splash,* pp. 17–32. First Basal Pre-primer of the Macmillan Readers. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1951. Copyright, 1951, by The Macmillan Company.

find how the pictures help to tell the story, discuss the title page, and perhaps decide why the print in the title is so large. They learn how to turn pages properly and talk about the direction in which to read. All these skills are important as children begin to share in the activities of reading groups and begin to read library books independently.

Prereading abilities continue to be strengthened as needed. Children who are ready for beginning-reading experiences will not all be equally proficient in the prereading abilities upon which successful reading depends. Prereading activities should not end when beginning-reading experiences start. The children who have begun to read will continue to share in many of the same types of experiences which are of benefit at the prereading level. The directed activities of beginning reading need as their setting many of the same stimulating primary experiences with books, stories, and words that provide the setting for the prereading program.

CHOOSING MATERIAL WITH WHICH TO BEGIN

The materials that provide the initial contacts with printed matter in the prereading period should continue to be used as children begin to read for themselves. Library books, announcements on the bulletin board, class records of activities, letters received from other classes, and special captions to pictures all have their contribution to make. However, children cannot be expected to learn to read all of these materials with complete independence in the beginning. Certain of them need to be selected to serve as the center of activities designed to develop precise recognition of words and phrases while others are used to supply as much supplementary experience of a prereading nature as seems desirable.

Experience records have a place. Of all the materials available, classroom records are probably the closest to the interests and experiences of the group. The children have shared in composing the record. It is in their words. It contains ideas with which they are familiar, and this familiarity is often a great help as the children take on more responsibility for reading lines, phrases, and words for themselves. Whether experience records are used alone or parallel with preprimers, they have a place among a child's beginning-reading materials.

Of all the records in a classroom, which should be selected for special attention in a reading group? Much will depend on the ac-

tivities and interests of the given group. However, since it is important to help children become familiar with selected words, it is desirable to choose those records which have a relatively light vocabulary load. It may also help to focus on an activity that leads to a series of related charts in which the same vocabulary is likely to recur. For example, the children plan a trip to the firehouse. The teacher helps them to write their plans. When they return, they record the details of their trip. A little later they may dictate stories about the firemen, the fire engine, or the firehouse. There may be other reading activities. The children may draw pictures and add captions. They may find pictures of firemen and equipment in one of their library books and identify some of their new words in the context. They could build a fire engine and write rules for playing in it. They might compose a new song. They could invite another class to visit them and use their records to help in telling the story of their trip. Such a variety of related experiences usually results in considerable repetition of words and phrases. Precautions need to be taken, however, not to overwork a single experience for the sake of the reading materials that may be forthcoming.

Special care needs to be taken in writing the experience charts that are used for beginning-reading activities. If children are to learn to recognize words and phrases independently, they must see them often. Typically, it will be neither possible nor desirable to reduce the total vocabulary load of an experience record to the simplicity found in some preprimers. These records serve a valuable purpose in stimulating oral-language development and in providing a means through which children can be helped to share what they have learned from an excursion or to summarize some other new experience. The vitality of such reports should not be destroyed by attempting to reduce them to typical preprimer vocabulary or style. However, in the records that seem suitable for beginning-reading activities, it is possible to do some controlling of the number and the repetition of new words. When children suggest ideas for an experience record, they, themselves, often use simple assertive sentences that follow a pattern. Several lines, for example, may begin with *We saw,* or *We went.* Then there will be times when the teacher may be able to substitute simpler words, or to shorten rambling sentences. Most of the sentences in these first materials should be kept to one or two lines in length. Phrases that the children will be expected to read as units should be kept on a single line. Manu-

script writing or print, rather than cursive writing, needs to be used. These are technical aspects of the problem of writing for beginners that are given special attention in preprimers. Classroom records that are to be used for beginning-reading experiences need to be developed along the same general lines.[4]

Preprimers have a special contribution to make. Working with classroom records does not provide experience in handling reading matter in book form—paged, printed, and illustrated. Furthermore, although these records may have high interest value, their relatively heavy vocabulary load may prolong the period of partial dependence upon the teacher. In most classrooms, part of a child's beginning-reading experiences is planned around preprimers, the first books in basal-reader series. These little books are paper-bound and light to hold; the print is large, and the lines well spaced. The stories typically center around children's activities—their pets, their family life, their games. Colorful pictures illustrate each page. These pictures are designed to give maximum help in word recognition. Indeed, at times much of the story is conveyed through the picture, not through the accompanying text. In all, a single preprimer may introduce as few as fourteen or fifteen, or as many as thirty or forty new words. Typically, a basal-reader series includes two or three preprimers of gradually increased difficulty. These little books are meant to be read rather rapidly. Vocabulary growth comes as the same words are met in a variety of simple, interesting settings.

It is not uncommon to find a first grade equipped with preprimers from several basal-reader series. Usually the argument given for working exclusively with the materials from a single series is that this procedure will result in a more carefully controlled vocabulary and in a more carefully graded introduction of new words. However, two factors suggest that this is not so important a consideration as it sounds. In the first place, the children are working in a classroom where they are using many other reading materials. Their word-recognition vocabulary, then, will be larger than that introduced by their preprimers almost from the start. Furthermore, the careful study that has gone into the construction of basal-reader series has resulted in considerable similarity in standards. While identical vocabulary will not be used in all series, there will be some

[4] Readers are referred to Chapter IV, pp. 90–92, where the construction of an experience record is described and to Chapter VIII, where illustrations of the uses of various types of records are given.

words in common, and any new preprimer to which children might turn will use much the same type of controlled introduction and repetition of new words. This being the case, strict adherance to the preprimers from one basal reader series does not seem, in actual fact, to be so important in securing a graded introduction to vocabulary as it sounds in theory, although it is true that new names for characters and pets may be confusing and that the ratio of new words to running words may be increased somewhat Reading preprimers from several series before beginning a harder book may, at times, provide more desirable experience than progressing directly from one book in a series to the next

If preprimers from several series are to be used for instructional purposes, they should be introduced before children have progressed much beyond fifty pages of a basal primer After this point preprimers serve well for independent reading and for recreational reading, but they are too easy to present much challenge in a reading group.

The fact that children will progress at different rates, and that all may not start beginning reading activities at the same time also needs to be considered in selecting preprimers Often it is desirable not to accentuate differences by using the same books with all groups Although children occasionally may be eager to have an opportunity to read the books another group has finished there is also the possibility that they will be discouraged to see others so obviously progressing faster than they are It is possible too that just enough of the story will be overheard to detract from some of its interest value Taking all factors into account it is often desirable to reserve certain materials for children who are progressing slowly These materials can be released for supplementary reading by other children after the group has used them for instructional purposes

Every teacher has personalized her methods of teaching reading to a certain extent The choice of materials for groups progressing slowly, or for those who are most advanced may well depend on the teacher's own feeling of how she is able to use them most successfully Other things being equal, children who make slower progress may benefit from beginning books that introduce a relatively small vocabulary and use a maximum amount of repetition [5] They may

[5] For a pioneer study in this area see Arthur I Gates *Interest and Ability in Reading*, pp 3 11 New York The Macmillan Company 1931

also profit from working with books from a series in which there are ample, easy, supplementary materials.

In a very small class, a teacher may even allow each child to begin to read with the preprimer that is most interesting to him. This results in a beginning-reading program that is almost completely individualized. Class size makes such individual instruction very difficult to achieve in many schools. Even were it possible, it is doubtful if it is necessary. Unless there is an unusual range of abilities in a class, or a combination of very difficult personality problems, there seems to be no reason why children should not have the experience of working together in their first reading activities.

Plans need to be made so that experiences with several types of materials supplement each other. When children are working both with preprimers and with a variety of classroom materials, care needs to be taken to be sure that these experiences supplement each other effectively. Undoubtedly the children will be working with a heavier total vocabulary **load.** This load is perhaps not as heavy as it first appears, since there is evidence that children sometimes remember long words with distinctive configurations more easily than they do small words with somewhat similar configurations.[6] Thus, words that may appear on experience records, like *storekeeper conductor, Hallowe'en,* and *Santa Claus,* will not always cause undue difficulty. Even so, adjustments may be needed if the children's work with varied materials is to be successful.

There are several ways in which children can be helped to meet the heavier vocabulary load occasioned by the use of several types of reading materials. First, it is not necessary to work for independent recognition of every word the children meet. Beginning readers can be encouraged to read as much as they are able, but can be helped, as they would be during prereading experiences, with words that are not, for the moment, important for them to be able to read for themselves. Second, pictures can be used in experience records to give clues to key words just as they are in preprimers. For example, one group recorded a walk around the neighborhood in a series of short sentences. *We saw men fixing the street. We saw the post office. We saw Tippy's new puppy.* Each sentence was illustrated with an

[6] Althea Beery "Development of Reading Vocabulary and Word Recognition," *Reading in the Elementary School,* pp. 184–186. Forty eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 2. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949.

appropriate picture. Since *We saw* was familiar, it was easy for the children to read this chart independently. A third adjustment of total vocabulary load can be made by re-using the vocabulary of the preprimer, or, in some cases, previewing it. Preprimers and classroom records do not, then, need to make conflicting demands on the reader. When they are used skillfully, they supplement and reinforce each other while they help to expand the child's ability to read independently in a wide variety of situations.

Special needs of individuals should be taken into account. The types of reading materials provided for beginners may require special adjustment in the case of groups with particular needs. Children who progress slowly, as mentioned earlier, may benefit from material with a light vocabulary load and much repetition. They may also benefit from much work with simple experience records that they, themselves, have helped to write. Children whose experience background is markedly different from that of the typical middle-class suburban child may need more classroom records developed around situations with which they are familiar. In some cases, teachers may mimeograph or hectograph little stories so that the children may work with preprimer materials written specially for them. In a rural community, these stories may be about children in a rural school, farming, planting gardens, or raising chickens. If the children are from an underprivileged city area, their reading material may touch upon busses, traffic rules, or boats along the water front.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION FOR BEGINNING READING

Beginning instruction in reading needs to be given in small groups that are relatively free from interruption. In a typical first grade, children will have worked in groups of varying sizes and personnel from the beginning of the year. Youngsters who have had such experiences should be accustomed to carrying out plans independently and to working together. They should also be used to a certain amount of regularity in scheduling. When group work in reading begins, it should not alter greatly the total pattern of classroom activities. The teacher will now need longer periods of relatively uninterrupted time to work with groups. These should be planned so that it is possible for the children to continue to engage in the unit activities and in the individual and group projects which were of such great educative value at the prereading level. This section suggests some of the steps that may be taken to secure effective grouping

and scheduling as first reading activities are begun. In Chapter VI are discussed some of the adjustments in grouping and scheduling that are possible as primary children gain increased reading skill.

Grouping for Beginning Work

Establish reading groups gradually. The practice of setting up one reading group at a time, as suggested in Chapter IV, is usually much less disrupting of on going classroom activities than would be the procedure of starting group work with all children at once. Ideally, the first reading group simply offers one other type of activity for a selected number of children, in a day already filled with interesting individual and group projects. If first experiences center around classroom records the reading group may not seem very different from other groups that have worked with the teacher for a variety of other language experiences.

As suggested in Chapter IV, the teacher will gradually identify those children who seem most likely to be ready to begin to read. As other children go about different activities, those who are ready for their first reading instruction come together to work with the teacher. Gradually, as the children become accustomed to carrying on independently while the teacher is at work with a reading group, and as others in the class seem ready for beginning-reading experiences, new reading groups are established.

Mention was made in Chapter IV of communities where a high premium is placed on learning to read early by parents, community, school administration, and even teachers themselves. This often results in pressure to begin formal instruction in reading as soon as possible. Children sense this pressure, and those who are not in the first reading group may be disturbed. In such a situation, school personnel and interested community members would work toward better adult understanding of reading readiness. However, this is a long process and not one that immature youngsters can understand. Under such circumstances, it may be wise to begin group work with all children whenever the first group is ready for beginning-reading activities. This is the place for the activities with reading-readiness workbooks described in Chapter IV, or for many simple activities with preprimers that provide for greatly increased repetition of new vocabulary.

Adjust the size and number of groups to the needs of the particular situation. Three reading groups are often recommended as

desirable for beginning-reading activities. However, in actual practice, grouping does not often work out this simply. The number of groups established eventually depends in part on the range of reading ability within the class, in part on how effectively the children can work together, and in part on how skillful the teacher is in managing group work. While children with different degrees of skill may work together for some types of reading activities, it is usually desirable to group, for instructional purposes, children of approximately the same level of ability. The range of ability in a particular class may be such that work on three levels suffices, or it may demand four or five groups. Then, too, whereas a rather large group of cooperative children may work well together, one or two very dominant personalities can make it highly desirable to work with a much smaller number. First experiences in a reading group will probably be more successful, too, if there is opportunity for considerable individual help from the teacher, and for active participation. The size of the group should be adjusted to achieve this.

Evidence that a group is too large may be found in persisting types of behavior such as failing to follow directions, paying attention to other children rather than to the story, losing the page, or being reluctant to participate in discussion. Such behavior may indicate that a child has been incorrectly placed and needs simpler activities, or it may suggest that he has not yet learned to work well with others. However, if these factors are ruled out, inattention and lack of participation may mean that the group is too large to allow for the individualized help the children need. On the teacher's side, consistently feeling uncertain as to the progress of specific children, feeling under pressure to provide for more help than the reading period seems to allow, or concern lest all children did not have adequate opportunity to participate may indicate that too many children are in the group. If the numbers are reduced, even by one or two, it may become much more easy to give each child the attention he needs.

Expect changes in group personnel. Even at the beginning-reading level, personnel in groups will change. Some children who show great promise at first will make regular, but plodding gains. Others will spurt ahead. Some who did not seem likely candidates for the first reading group may progress very rapidly once they have begun group work. Such changes in status are to be expected.

It is desirable to develop ways of making adjustments in the per-

sonnel of groups without causing children to become unduly concerned about being accelerated or about being moved to a slower group. Calling groups by the names of children who meet in them, or choosing special names for groups is preferable to labelling them as first, second, or third. When children are moved from one group to another, the invitation should be casual, with no apparent special praise for progress or undue commiseration for being moved back. The practice of using a different preprimer for the beginning work of each group has merit when it comes to shifting a child from group to group. If the materials are different, the change is not so obviously a promotion or demotion either in the eyes of the child or of his parents. However, special care may need to be taken to help the child who moves from one group to another with any vocabulary that is unfamiliar in the materials being used by the group to which he goes. The beginning-reading period is an opportune time to establish the idea that instructional groups will change and that children may expect, from time to time, to be invited to meet with another group.

Use varied groupings for different reading activities. Changes in grouping are to be expected, also, as reading activities shift from work with preprimers to work with experience records. Since work with the latter is often the outcome of on-going classroom activities, the reading may need to be done by the entire class, or by the special group who had the experience leading to the composing of the chart. Such groups frequently bring together children of varied levels of ability. When this is the case, children can be given different responsibilities in the reading activity. Those who have the most skill may take the leadership in reading the materials to others or in identifying key words or phrases, while those who are least advanced may use pictures to find given lines, share in the general discussion of the record, and perhaps point to phrases or sentences that are repeated. Groups with different personnel may also be set up for such activities as story hours or recreational-reading periods where each child may work with a book of his own choosing. Such cooperative reading activities involving many ability levels are important if units of work and other class projects are to contribute to increased reading skill. These varied groupings help, too, to break down children's tendencies to classify themselves as being in the best or the poorest reading group.

Scheduling for Beginning Work

Secure flexibility by using large time-blocks. Flexibility in use of time within large time-blocks is characteristic of scheduling in the modern elementary school. In the primary grades it is sometimes convenient to think of the day as divided into four main parts, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, separated by periods for active play, for rhythmic activities, or for lunch. Within these large blocks are scheduled varied activities—carrying out plans in connection with one or more units of work; individual activities at the easel, the table of number games, or the library corner; work on specific skills in reading, number, language, or handwriting; carrying out classroom responsibilities for dusting, feeding pets, or straightening the play corner; experiences with music; sharing periods and evaluation sessions. The time allotted for such activities depends upon what has to be done. On some days an entire period may be needed in order to carry out special plans for a single project. On others, a much smaller amount of time may be scheduled for one aspect of the same project. The objective of such flexible scheduling is to allow for the best possible use of the time and energies of individuals and groups.

The scheduling of beginning reading groups will depend on how they best fit into the total day. Typically they are planned for periods when the rest of the class is engaged in activities which require a minimum of guidance from the teacher. Some teachers prefer to set aside one time block in the schedule for reading groups to meet in succession. This is not the only possible organization. Sometimes it is desirable to work with one or two groups, then to go back to the class as a whole in order to help those children who are running out of things to do or to give the entire class a break for recess, and then to come back to the other groups. On occasions, it may help to meet with some groups in the morning and with some in the afternoon. In general, children need to work with reading material regularly in order to fix vocabulary, although even with beginners there may be days when it is appropriate to provide independent work type activities or supplementary reading for some groups while others work with the teacher. Such adjustments need to be made in the light of the on-going activities of the particular group. They will not be made in the same way from one first grade to another, or even from day to day within one class.

Time should be allotted to each group in terms of what needs to be accomplished. Although beginners need regular instruction, setting an arbitrary time limit, such as fifteen or twenty minutes, for each group does not actually guarantee that all groups will receive the same amount of help. On days when a new book is being introduced or a new story begun, more time may be needed if effective use is to be made of the interest aroused. On other days a story may present no such special problems and a shorter reading period may be just as valuable. When three or four beginning groups are at work, it is helpful for the teacher to consider such varied needs for time in planning the children's work for the coming day. For example, if one group is going to need special help with new words and also time for the experience of reading the new words in a story, it may be possible to plan for a shorter activity for a second group, and perhaps to occupy a third with work-type activities. Even with the simple stories of the preprimer level, the activities of a reading group need unity. Time will be wasted in the end if a group is stopped five minutes before the conclusion of an exciting story because the period is up, or if children who have exhausted their interest in a story are held for five minutes' more discussion or word study in order to use up their full time allotment. In general, however, the teacher should strive to give each group sufficient time that real progress can be made.

Include varied reading activities in the schedule. In their anxiety to give beginners a good start in reading, many teachers feel that one period of reading instruction during the day is not enough. Although it is relatively easy to schedule two sessions with a preprimer for one or two groups, it is extremely difficult to find time for additional meetings of three or four groups if other valuable classroom activities are not to be neglected.

The system of using preprimers and experience records in combination offers one useful solution to the problem of supplying sufficient experience in reading without curtailing other classroom activities. Usually work with a preprimer is scheduled regularly, if not every day at least often enough that children do not lose the thread of the stories or forget the words or phrases they have learned. Then a second reading session is spent with chart materials. At times the members of a particular reading group will continue to work as a group for this additional reading; at times they may join other children with a special interest in the particular record. Often the

work with an experience record or set of records fosters the on-going activities of a unit of work—developing a special report, sharing the report with other children, or rereading it in order to draw appropriate illustrations. In this way the same time-block is used to contribute to growth in several areas simultaneously.

In a typical first grade there are also opportunities for other reading activities related to special projects. There may be a period to check new notices on the bulletin board. If there is a daily news bulletin, it may be read as part of a group sharing period. Helpers' charts will need to be checked and birthdays for the week noted. Teachers who capitalize on opportunities such as these can find many ways of providing for additional reading experiences without curtailing other worth-while activities.

Work with preprimers and experience records need not be scheduled in exactly the same way every day. There may be times when it is important to spend full time on a set of records—to share them with another group, to use them in a program to entertain parents, or to make a report to another class. At other times the children may concentrate on a preprimer, explore supplementary materials, or share with other groups some of the stories they have learned to read aloud. As children become more skillful readers, there are possibilities for still greater variations in the types of reading experiences in which they engage. These are described in detail in Chapter VI. Even at the beginning-reading level, the child's total reading experiences will be the richer when many types of materials and many different situations are used to teach him to read.

Use pupil-teacher planning to help secure a smooth-running day. The time spent in the early fall helping children learn to plan their activities and to work independently bears fruit when it comes to adding reading groups to other class experiences. If concern for group activities in reading leads to an overabundance of seat work in order to keep the remainder of the class quiet and busy, many of the potential values of the primary program will be lost. Pupil-teacher planning is an important means of guaranteeing that children's total experiences will be as rich as possible.

Planning usually is done at several points in the day. Young children cannot be expected to remember plans over a long time span. Normally time will be taken to check the plans for the period ahead. After it is clear that groups and individuals have the materials they

need and know exactly what they are going to do, the children start to work. The teacher may spend some time making sure that no unforeseen problems have arisen. When all is going smoothly she is free to call together the members of a reading group. Usually she will check with the children as the reading group disbands to make sure they know what they are going to do next. If they are to engage in follow-up activities related to their reading, these are explained. Often it is desirable to take a few minutes between reading groups to see that all is going smoothly.

The problem of securing a relatively quiet classroom while reading groups are in session often can be attacked through direct discussion with the children. "What kinds of things could we do, and what should we not try to do?" is the question. Various children may suggest painting, coloring, looking at library books, drawing, playing with toys, doing puzzles, working quietly on a special project, finishing classroom housekeeping responsibilities. They can be helped to see that hammering, handling heavy blocks, playing noisy games, and working on something where the help of teacher is going to be needed frequently are not appropriate for periods in which reading groups are scheduled. Before the first group work is begun, the children may even make believe that a reading group is at work and practice having a quiet period—walking on tiptoe, speaking in lower voices, and getting their own equipment without help. If the children understand the reason for such suggestions, and know that they, themselves, will enjoy their reading more because others will be equally thoughtful of them, they will enter willingly into such plans.

Place reading groups so that other children are not disturbed. Today most first grade teachers gather those who are to read in a small circle in the front of the room or in some other spot away from the center of on going class activities. This is another way of helping children carry out other activities with more freedom while reading groups are at work. The small reading circle also brings the teacher nearer to the children and makes it possible for them to talk in low voices. The low voices, in turn, both encourage others in the room to speak softly, and prevent them from overhearing and being distracted by the discussion of the story. Reading activities are important, but they are only one part of the total experiences which are valuable for a first-grade child. Adjustments which seem to be

necessary in order to foster the work of the reading group should be examined carefully in the light of their effect upon other aspects of growth.

DEVELOPING FIRST EXPERIENCES IN A READING GROUP

The work of a beginning-reading group is typically quite varied in nature. The most important experiences center around reading and discussing the preprimer story or the experience record. However, these need to be supplemented by a variety of rereading and review activities if children are to grow in independent recognition of sentences, phrases, and words. All these experiences need to be planned so that interest in reading is kept high and children have the satisfaction of making progress.

Introducing and Reading the Story

Develop interest in the first reading activities. As children gather for their first day in the reading group, a major consideration is to arouse their interest in the story and to give them the satisfaction of feeling that they can identify some of the material and read the story for themselves. If a preprimer is to be read, activities usually center first in getting acquainted with the book. Children are given time to examine its cover. They are told its title. They look at the pictures and talk about the kinds of stories it is likely to contain. They discover that a boy and girl, a father and mother, perhaps a baby, and a dog or a cat are going to be in the stories. When readiness books from the same series have been used, they may recall previous discussions about the same characters. If some members of the group still have difficulty in handling books, time is taken to help them learn how to hold their books comfortably and how to turn the pages. Once general interest in the book has been aroused and curiosity regarding its pictures has been satisfied, the children are ready to begin their first story.

When an experience record is used as the basis for the first reading group activities, the situation will have less novelty, as the children will have participated in other discussions involving experience records. Arousing interest, in this case, may be largely a matter of helping them recall again the circumstances that provided the background for the record. They may discuss what they thought was most interesting about their experience, and they can talk a bit about how they wrote it– which ideas they put first, which ideas they wrote

next, how their story ended. This discussion then leads into reading and talking about the contents of the chart. Depending on the nature of the chart, the teacher may take it up a few lines at a time, or she may read it through entirely for the children and then direct discussion to separate lines. Sometimes the first experience of trying to read a chart independently develops directly out of the activities of writing it. "Who can remember how we wrote our first line?" "Yes, that's what we said, and here it is on our chart." "What did we say next?" "Where would it be on the chart?"

Give the help that is needed to make first reading experiences successful. When children first try to read, the teacher takes the responsibility for telling them many of the exact words. Children who have not seen their new preprimer before are not expected to be able to figure out that the boy's name is *Tom,* or the girl's name is *Betty,*[7] although were there to be children in the class with the same names, the teacher would certainly capitalize upon it.

The first reading of the story is done in such a way that the children think about its meaning and see how to use pictures and context as an aid in recognizing exact words. They talk about the pictures. They are helped to raise questions related to the printed material, and then the teacher helps them to read the words.

In the preprimer under discussion the first three pictures, without any accompanying context, show Tom talking to his two sisters as he rides his wagon, and then the wheel of the wagon coming off. With the following picture the simple text begins. 'Tom's name is written right here under his picture. Can you find it in your book? Put your finger under it.' 'What is he doing?' 'Do you think Tom is going to be able to fix the wheel? Let's turn the page and see." . . . He is riding it, isn't he?" "The story tells what Betty is saying to him. She says '*Ride, ride.*' Who would like to read it?" . . . 'Look at the next page. Did the wheel stay on?" "Who do you think is helping Tom?" 'Do you think he will make the wheel stay on?" 'Did you ever have a wheel come off a wagon you were riding? How did you fix yours?" . . . "Let's turn the page. Is the wheel working all right?" "Tom's name is in the story under the picture. Can you put your finger under

[7] The lesson that is described is based on the first story in Odille Ousley and David H. Russell, *My Little Red Story Book,* pp. 5–9. First Pre-primer of the Ginn Basic Readers. Boston: Ginn and Company. 1948. Copyright, 1948, by Ginn and Company. It does not follow the words of the teacher's manual exactly, nor would the authors expect a creative teacher to do so.

it?" "The story tells what the garage man said to Tom. He said, *'Ride, Tom. Ride, Tom, ride.'* " "Who would like to read it?" "Who can find where it says *'Ride, Tom.'* Read it to us." "Who can find where it says *'Ride, Tom, ride.'*?" "Anthony, will you read it?" "Who thinks he could read our whole story?" "Who else would like to try it?" "Whose picture is at the start of our next story? Her name is right here under her picture and it's just like the name of somebody in our room. Who can read it?"

If an experience record is being read, the children will have some familiarity with the contents but there are likely to be many more words for them to remember. This may mean that the first reading is largely a repetition of sentences read by the teacher. "Who can remember how we wrote our first line?" "Yes, we said *'We went to the park'* and here it is. Who would like to read it?" "What did we say next? The picture will tell you." "Who will point to *'We saw a squirrel'*?" "What did we see next?" . . . "That's right, it was a man with a boat, and you remember we said *'We saw a man rowing a boat.'* " "Here it is, right here. Josie, will you read it?" "And what did our last line say?" "It was fun, wasn't it? And we said, *'We had fun.'* Who will read it?"

After this first reading the children may go back to find special lines. They may match a line on a flash card with the same line on the chart and then read it. They may try to put their hands around the words that say, *We saw.* Several children may try to read the entire chart, with help from the teacher as needed.

In such beginning activities, much of the first independent reading may be almost an echo of what the teacher has just said. " The first line says, *'We went to the park.'* Who can read it?" "He is riding again, isn't he, and Betty is saying *'Ride, ride.'* Jean, suppose you read it." In the process the children have been interested in the story, and have felt that they had a real part in reading it. They have also looked actively at words, sentences, and phrases that they will meet again.

Develop habits of thoughtful reading from the beginning. Throughout all beginning activities a thoughtful approach to reading needs to be the major aim even though the materials are very simple, and often very repetitive. Children concentrate on understanding the story. They read to find out, for sure, what is happening in the picture. They find the line that answers a question. They

find the name of the boy in the story. They use the picture to help tell them what the story is about. They may be inaccurate occasionally in their recognition of sentences or phrases, but this is not, at first, a matter of as much concern as is that of helping them get the meaning. The teacher can make corrections in such a way that the child is helped to feel that he has done the most important part of the reading job while his attention is called to the exact words. "That's right, he is riding, and what the story says is '*Ride, Tom.*' " "It was Maryville Park, but we didn't write its name. Remember, we only said '*We went to the park.*' " Such corrections help with accurate recognition, but they do not put undue emphasis on isolated words.

Give children more responsibility for reading as they acquire a word-recognition vocabulary. After the first introduction of a preprimer story or the initial reading of an experience record, group activities are usually planned to allow for rereading of the story as a whole and of separate lines, and for reviewing selected words and phrases in various other ways. Through these activities children very rapidly become able to recognize the words and phrases that have been repeated frequently. They also develop considerable skill in using the picture and the context as aids to independent reading.

The more adept children become, and the more words and phrases they are able to recognize, the more independence they can be urged to assume in reading new material. Soon they become able to read several lines with very little help. "What do you think father will say? Read all three lines at the bottom of the page and see if you are right?" "Let's read the story under the picture." "Now, do we have everything in our record that we wanted to say? Who will read it all for us so that we can tell?" "There is something new on our bulletin board this morning. I wonder if anyone can read it?"

Introduce new words through context and discussion. Part of the skill of helping children begin to read simple materials independently lies in the way unfamiliar words are introduced. Beginning-reading materials differ from those which will be read a little later in that the number of new words introduced at one time is very small, and the picture and context are particularly well designed to give clues for word recognition. Since this is the case, it often enriches the meaning both of the word and of the story to introduce the new word in the story context or at the time when children need it rather than to use some other device to introduce it ahead of time.

This procedure also encourages children, from the beginning, to try to figure out the story for themselves. The use of preprimer pictures to give help with new words has already been illustrated. Context, also, can be used very early. For example, a few pages later in the preprimer that has just been used for illustration,[8] there occurs the sentence, *"See Flip and Susan." And* is a new word, but *see, Flip* and *Susan* are familiar. With this context, the children are not likely to have much trouble in deciding what *and* must be.

All new words do not have to be introduced in context. Sometimes the discussion preceding the reading of the story will provide an appropriate opportunity for the introduction of a new word or phrase, and the teacher may write it on the chalkboard. Occasionally a word first used in an experience record will reappear in a preprimer or vice versa and the children can be reminded of the setting in which it appeared before.

The procedure of encouraging children to use context and picture clues to help in the identification of new words is not confined to the beginning-reading level alone. Later in the first grade, when three or four new words may be introduced on a single page, there will often need to be more definite plans to work with the new words ahead of the reading if the story is to be understood. However, whenever picture and context clues seem to provide sufficient help, the child should be encouraged to try to use them. As he becomes more skilled, the child will develop another important aid to word recognition in his growing ability to use word-analysis clues. As rapidly as a youngster develops new techniques, he should be encouraged to test them out. The process starts at the beginning-reading level.

Children should not be expected to remember every new word after the first time it is met. The new vocabulary will need to be repeated in many settings before they are sure of it. Often a word will be recognized on one page and not on another. It may be identified at the beginning of a line, but missed as part of the phrase in the middle. Sometimes it will be picked out accurately in one sentence and missed when the sentence structure is changed slightly. All this is part of becoming able to read. Teachers should expect the process to be uneven and should provide for ample repetition in meaningful settings.

[8] Odille Ousley and David H. Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.

Using Concrete Aids with Beginners

Use oral reading as an aid in understanding. The beginner needs all the concrete help he can get as he takes his first steps toward independent reading. Crutches are a handicap if a child relies upon them beyond the point where he needs them, but as he starts to read certain types of concrete help can prove useful. Oral reading is one of these.

Reading aloud has many values. The results of one extended experiment [9] demonstrated that children can learn to read with comprehension without reading aloud, and suggested that there may be possible advantages in the reduction of tendencies to vocalize when reading silently. However, questions can be raised as to whether the disadvantages of this procedure do not outweigh any possible advantages. Up to the time when they begin to read, children have been using words orally. In the beginning, the reinforcement of hearing their own voices say the words at which they are looking seems to help in getting meaning. For some children, who have had stories read to them for many years, being able to read the story out loud may be convincing evidence that they actually have learned to read. Most youngsters enjoy the experience of being able to read to others. For reasons such as these most first grade teachers provide for considerable oral work. This does not mean, however, that children need to take turns in reading one line at a time, or that all need to sit and wait while each child reads his special part. Even in the beginning there are many ways of providing opportunities for children to read aloud in more meaningful settings.

A certain amount of oral reading typically takes place as the story is first read and discussed. Children should be allowed to read silently first so that they may think about the meaning of what they are reading. Then, when all have had the opportunity to read for themselves, they may talk about what they have read, or read a line or several lines aloud. "What do you think he is saying? Let's read the story and see." "What did he say, Ann?" "Will you read it for us?" As stories grow longer, children may find several lines, each of which contributes to the discussion. These may be told in the children's words, or read aloud. Other opportunities for the oral

[9] Guy Thomas Buswell, *Non-Oral Reading: A study of its use in the Chicago Public Schools.* Supplementary Educational Monographs No. 60. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, September, 1945.

reading of short passages may be provided as children review the story, read phrase or sentence cards, or find phrases or words that answer specific questions. Many of the review activities suggested in the following section assume that children will answer aloud.

An entire story or chart would probably not be read aloud in sequence until after the children have had an opportunity to discuss it. Then one child might be asked to read the complete story, or children might take turns reading one or two lines at a time. If the reading of the entire story comes as a culmination rather than as an introduction, the children will have had enough preparation to be able to read well, and the listening audience will be able to enjoy it.

Even with beginners, it is not necessary to plan to read every story aloud. The teacher often can secure ample evidence of understanding and of accurate word recognition through discussion and review activities. Oral reading can then be used to share the story with other groups, or to give the members of one group the fun of reading aloud for their own entertainment. It is also possible to take well-studied stories home to read to parents. Oral reading can be a valuable aid to beginners, but the way in which it is used should be varied to meet the needs of the particular situation.

Oral reading occasionally serves another purpose for beginners. Some children murmur to themselves, even when they are reading silently. These youngsters seem to need a little of the reinforcement of their own voices to help them in understanding what they read. Vocalization becomes a handicap when children reach the place where their eyes can cover the material more rapidly than their voices. However, in the beginning a certain amount of this semi-oral reading may be helpful. As they become better readers, most children cease to use vocalization of their own accord. Those who do not can be helped to see that the best readers do not need to say the words out loud, and given a little extra encouragement to try to read without moving their lips.

Provide markers if they seem to be needed. Following a story from line to line without losing one's place is not always easy for beginners. When reading materials are only one or two lines long and these lines are well spaced, markers do not have much value unless children are very immature. With slightly longer passages, they may be helpful. Usually a strip of colored paper about an inch to an inch and a half in width and about as long as the width of the page is



Helen Weatherwax

Books are sources of information from the beginning. This five year old ornithologist painted her own bird book. (Courtesy of The University School, Indiana University and the *Daily Herald Telephone*, Bloomington, Indiana.)



D Arthur Bricker

Beginning-reading activities soon develop ability to recognize individual words. When you can find in the story the word your teacher holds up on a flash card, you've taken one important step. (Copyright 1953, Board of Education, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

used. This the children slide down from line to line as they read.

All beginners will not need markers. Some will acquire the knack of reading from line to line without any difficulty. Others will start the same line twice, lose their places, or be unable to follow when others read aloud. Here the marker is of help. Holding books and handling markers at the same time often proves difficult. Sometimes it helps to allow those using markers to sit at a table where they can have support for their books, or to drop their books to their laps so that they have their hands free. This problem needs to be solved in a way that assures good posture and good light on books. A marker should be a temporary device. As soon as children become more skilled, it is possible to encourage them to read certain easy pages without markers. Gradually they discard them for all reading.

Use other devices to sharpen the child's sensitivity to the configuration of a word. Other concrete aids, such as putting a finger under the right answer or putting hands around the word or words on the chalkboard that answer the question, also help in beginning reading. The child who cannot read a phrase accurately when he sees it in a sentence sometimes can identify it when he blocks it off with his hands. A pointer slid under the words of a chart as the child or teacher reads may help to establish left-to-right orientation. Word, phrase, and sentence cards, as discussed in the following section, may aid in accurate recognition. All children will not learn with equal ease merely by looking at words. For some the experience of drawing a line around a word to show its general configuration may be helpful. As children learn to write, some may benefit from the kinesthetic experience of writing their new words in meaningful activities. In general, the greater the number of senses that can be appealed to, the greater the likelihood of successful learning on the part of the members of the reading group. No method should become routine. All children need not use the same aids or use them to the same extent. Whenever the opportunity presents itself for a child to read successfully without resorting to a special concrete aid, he is encouraged to do so.

Providing Review Activities

Plan for purposeful rereading of the story. Study of a preprimer story or an experience record does not usually end with the first reading. After the children have the general gist of the story they take time to discuss it, and in the process they are helped to become

more familiar with sentence, phrase, and word units. The skill with which these review activities are planned does much to determine how effectively children learn to get meaning from what they read.

As the first reading of the story typically proceeds, there are opportunities for a certain amount of rereading. The children read a two- or three-line story or a few lines of an experience record silently in order to answer a question. Then, as they discuss what they have found out, someone may read the exact line that gives the answer. Two or three other children may read the same line. There may be disagreement as to what the right answer is, and someone may read the entire story to make sure. As stories become longer there are more varied opportunities for discussion and rereading. The children may discuss how the characters felt and find the line or the phrase that proves their point. They may pick out the most interesting part of a story, the funniest part, or the most exciting part. With an experience chart they may read the lines they helped to write, reread to see if everything has been included, or pick out the parts for which illustrations would be appropriate. All such types of discussion provide opportunities to help children gain acquaintance with phrases or words while they concentrate on the meaning of the story.

Provide opportunities to test out growing skill in recognizing words, phrases, and sentences. Beginners delight in trying to identify words and phrases, merely to prove to themselves and to others that they have learned to read. Some very profitable review experiences can be provided by asking children to locate specific parts of a story or chart. Such questions can be phrased so that they have to think about what they are reading. The teacher may ask the children to find lines that answer specific questions. "Where is the part that tells us where we went?" "Who can find the line that tells what we did?" A little later the questions may refer to phrases or to words. "Who can find the two words that tell the name of the park?" "Put your fingers around just the one word that tells what mother did." "It's up here on the board, too. Who can point to it?" "We talked about the pony three times in our story. Can anyone find the word *pony* in all three places?" After the correct word, sentence, or phrase has been located, several children may read it orally. If it is being confused with a similar phrase there may be some discussion on how to tell the two apart. Sometimes new words or phrases may be written on the chalkboard and the children asked to find the one

read by the teacher, to pick out one they know and ask another child to read it, or to select one they know, read, and erase it.

At the beginning it may be helpful to provide a certain number of activities where children actually match words, phrases, and sentences. This can be of particular value to the child who is still having trouble noting major differences in configurations. The children may look at the child's name on the first page of their story, and then see if they can find the same word on the second page and put their fingers around it. The teacher may hold up word cards and have the children point to the same word in their books, on the chalkboard, or in an experience record. The teacher may read the first line of a chart and then ask the children to find another line which begins the same way. She may write a line from a preprimer on the board and then ask the children to find the same line in their books. When an experience chart is being read, a duplicate chart is often prepared and then cut apart to form cards consisting of whole lines, of phrases, or of words. Children can take one of the cards and hold it under the matching word or phrase on the uncut chart If the word or phrase recurs on the chart, they can see in how many places they can find it. A preprimer story can be reproduced in chart form and studied in the same way. All such activities should be accompanied by discussion which adds meaning to the task of learning to identify words or phrases accurately.

Card holders in which word, phrase, and sentence cards can be placed are a help in review activities. These holders are sold commercially, but they also can be made easily in any desired length. Heavy wrapping paper may be folded back on itself to form pockets about one and one half inches deep, leaving about three inches between each pocket After the paper is folded it can be taped or sewn in place. The result is a tiered series of pockets deep enough to hold the cards that make up a story, line by line. Such holders have a variety of uses for review purposes. A story can be rebuilt, one line at a time. As children begin to recognize lines, phrases, and words, they may build their own stories in the holder and ask other children to read them. They may be asked to find a word or a phrase designated by the teacher, and to take it out of the chart. Each child may find the phrase or the sentence which he wishes to read and lift out the card as he reads it.

Care needs to be taken not to overdo the review activities centered around a single story. Preprimer materials are meant to be covered

rather quickly. The child is not expected to become absolutely certain of a word or phrase after he meets it in one story. It will be repeated in many different settings and in several easy books, and children need the satisfaction of going on to a new story. In general, quantities of interesting materials, presenting many of the same words and phrases in different settings, are preferable to intensive study of one experience record or of one preprimer story. Periodically, the teacher may check certain children individually to be sure that vocabulary is being mastered.

Use individual work-type activities to help to provide reviews. From time to time it may be valuable to give additional reading experience through work-type activities. With beginners, these activities need not be very extensive. If many opportunities to read are being provided during the day it is not necessary to end every group session with hectographed, mimeographed, or workbook exercises. Particularly questionable is the policy of providing quiet work-type activities for all children as a way of keeping them occupied while the reading groups are meeting. However, there will be times when children need additional contacts with new words, or when it is desirable to have one group work independently while others read with the teacher. As children become more skilled, a greater variety of independent activities are possible. Examples of these are included in the chapters that follow.

Work-type activities should be planned so that children are challenged to read thoughtfully in order to carry out whatever task has been set for them. Activities involving pictures can prove interesting to beginners. Children can be given pages on which words or sentences similar to those in the materials that they have been reading are hectographed and instructed to illustrate them. They may choose the part of the story they like best and draw a picture about it. It is also possible to hectograph a series of pictures illustrating various parts of the story and to ask the children to choose the phrase or sentence that matches the picture. Sometimes teachers mimeograph an experience chart which the children have read or write a short story using the words of the preprimer. These can be stapled into little individual booklets which children may illustrate.

Multiple-choice and true-false question forms can be adapted for use with beginners. Some of these may be based on the materials that have just been read.

Where did we go?
_____ to the park.
_____ to the Zoo.
_____ to town.

What color was the wagon? red blue green

Did father laugh? Yes No
Did mother laugh? Yes No

Often it is desirable to give children the experience of reading the new words in a different setting before they answer specific questions. If this seems important, a short paragraph using the same vocabulary can be written and followed by questions similar to those that have just been illustrated to check on comprehension.

Small card-holders constructed like the one described earlier for use with groups can be made for individual children. The youngsters themselves will enjoy helping to fold the paper, and holding it as it is pasted down. With these holders and sets of word or phrase cards developed from words they have been reading, the children can construct little stories for each other, reproduce the lines in the chart story, put together phrases that begin with the same words, and think of other ways of amusing themselves with the words they know. A little later as the children begin to write, they may use these word and phrase cards to help them with words they wish to spell. Increased skill in writing eventually provides another source of review activities. The children may write short stories, riddles, or poems, illustrate them; read them to other children or have them read by others, or take them home to read to their parents.

The workbooks accompanying basal readers are replete with interesting work-type activities for beginners. These materials, like other work-type materials, need to be selected in terms of the particular group. Taking all children through a workbook routinely, page by page, is not likely to meet individual needs at any reading level. For this reason, teachers often prefer to have small numbers of several interesting workbooks, and then to select activities as they seem appropriate.

All individual activities are more valuable if the teacher finds time to discuss them. Beginners, especially, are not far enough along to be able to identify their own difficulties and mistakes. Work-type activities need to be shared in the reading group. Papers merely corrected by the teacher and handed back do not serve the purpose.

Provide easy supplementary reading. Supplementary reading experiences provide another source of reviews for beginners. They need materials on the library table that they can read independently. Preprimers are a valuable resource for this purpose. Some of these may be supplementary books that repeat the vocabulary of the preprimers being used in reading groups. Others may belong to basal series not being used for group activities. Often it is desirable to release for supplementary reading a book which has been completed by a reading group. It is also possible to tear apart several preprimers and to bind the stories separately. These can be added to the library table as soon as the story has been finished by the reading group. Supplementary preprimers need not all be placed on the library table at once. If a few are added at a time, these simple, carefully written materials can provide worth-while independent reading experiences long after children have progressed to primers and first readers.

Teachers can also find many ways of re-using new vocabulary in the materials they write for children. Some of these may be hectographed versions of experience records or of children's stories. Single-word books may also be made by folding a piece of colored paper, printing the word on the outside, and pasting the appropriate picture inside so that the child may check his reading. In addition to the teacher-made materials added to the library table, there are the experience records, signs, captions to pictures, and notices with which first-grade classrooms abound.

Continually, in a room which is plentifully supplied with reading materials, children face fresh proofs that it is important to learn to read. Interesting messages await them. Information which they need is at hand. Records of their most exciting experiences are available for them to reread for their own pleasure or to share with their friends. Beginning readers start their activities in an atmosphere which is a rich source of stimulating opportunities to learn to read.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING BEGINNING-READING ACTIVITIES

Is the transition from prereading activities gradual enough to assure successful beginning-reading experiences?

Are reading activities planned so that other aspects of the primary program continue to make their full contribution to children's development?

Do children read for meaning, right from the start?

Are reading activities planned so that a wide variety of classroom materials make a contribution?

Are beginning-reading activities adjusted to a range of ability levels?

Are methods of grouping and scheduling flexible enough to allow for effective meeting of the needs of the group?

Do review activities contribute to habits of thoughtful reading while they foster accurate recognition of words and phrases?

Are children provided with easy, interesting supplementary materials from the start?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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PART III

DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT READERS IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

CHAPTER VI

PLANNING THE READING PROGRAM IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

THE CHILDREN AT WORK IN LATE THIRD GRADE

The children of the preceding chapter are now completing the third grade. About three-quarters of the class have been together for three years. A few have transferred to other schools. Several new pupils have joined the group. What is the present status of their reading ability and how have they grown?

The range in reading abilities is great. In a half day in the classroom a visitor is struck first with the wide range of abilities. Five children still struggle with materials of easy second grade level and read easily only if they have a first grade book in their hands. At the other extreme, three youngsters read fourth- and fifth-grade basal readers without any trouble. These three regularly, and several others at intervals, use the encyclopedia to secure information. This group is also becoming skillful in using the dictionary for help with new words. Between these extremes range the other members of the class. It is late in the spring and by this time a little over a quarter of the children can handle easy fourth-grade books. Most of the rest are still somewhat more at home with typical third grade materials but many of this group will be able to handle easy books written for fourth grade if the next teacher gives consistent help in the early fall. Some will need to be provided with second- and third grade materials for almost another full year. This range in abilities is not unusual. The progress is about what might be expected, and the four-year range in ability between the best and the poorest readers is typical.

Growth has not been even. The three children who are now the best readers were not all in the first group to begin to read in the first grade. One child belonged to that original group. One started a little later but soon caught up, and spent a good part of the year with the most ad-

vanced readers. The third did not show outstanding progress in reading for the entire first year. He did the work expected of his group, but sought little additional reading experience. Much of his free time was spent with the various media for self-expression, particularly the easel and clay table. In the second grade he discovered that books offered many exciting areas of exploration, and soon became one of the most avid readers.

The five most retarded children also have had varied reading careers. Two learned to read very slowly and were given greatly simplified programs from the beginning. Jane, the third child, was kept home by recurring colds for most of her first year. In spite of much individual help she has not yet made up for the poor start, although from month to month her progress is more rapid. John comes from a home where a sister two years older reads very well. During his three years in school his parents have had many conferences with his teachers regarding his progress. They are beginning to understand why John feels no challenge to learn to read as well as his sister. The fifth child, Bill, transferred to the school at the beginning of the third grade. His family had changed residence several times during his first two years in school. Eight teachers, in all, had been involved in teaching him how to read. He is just now beginning to feel at home with books. These changes in status from the predictions of the prereading period are also what might be expected. Many factors influence progress in learning to read.

Many types of materials are read. The variety of ways in which reading is now used impresses the visitor. Charts are still in evidence, but they serve more often as records of class plans needed by all for easy reference. One contains the list of characters for a play and a brief description of important points about each character. Another gives the general plans for a mural. A third lists the responsibilities of committees planning an open house to entertain parents. A fourth, near a table containing boxes of plants, seems to be a running record of an experiment with soils.

The library table now contains a wide selection of books. A number are marked with the call number of the city library. Others belong to the classroom collection. A few science and mechanics books have been brought to school by the boys. Recreational reading, science stories, several types of social-studies materials, a book on how to care for turtles, and another on how to build birdhouses testify to the variety of interests. The number of pamphlet materials has also increased. A small table contains several travel folders, some seed catalogs, a series of bulletins on foods, and two or three articles on jet-propelled planes. Nearby in an orange-crate file, there are folders containing other pamphlets and a number of pictures that help to provide information in areas where easy reading materials are difficult to locate.

A children's encyclopedia and several dictionaries, most of them picture dictionaries, are on a work table a little farther over. Textbooks are more prominent than they were in the first grade. The children recently

have begun to use a simple language text. They have several books that provide experience with number combinations. Half a dozen copies of the easiest books in a popular science series can be seen. Two or three copies of each of several different books on aspects of community life are also in evidence. Basal-reading series show signs of constant use; about ten copies of each of several sets have been provided. Some are at first- and second-grade level and some go as high as fifth grade.

The evidence from the materials in the classroom is that children are reading for many purposes and that they are capable of getting much information without the teacher's direct guidance. The children's activities confirm this. Several can be seen checking various parts of the class plans. Many turn to textbooks and to other reference materials to look up information. Two or three refer to a list of hard words to check their spelling as they write an invitation to their parents for their open house. A number have recreational reading at their desks. One pair are at work on an assignment arising out of the reading group of the day before.

Reading groups undertake a variety of activities. Observation of the groups at work on various reading activities helps to fill in the picture of the growth in reading ability. The least advanced children have been meeting together as a regular instructional group. The teacher customarily stays near these children when they read new materials. They can still profit from guidance in locating the answers to their questions, and they particularly need help when it comes to identifying new words. Even so, they now read a story from eight to ten pages in length, and are beginning to show considerable independence in working out simple words. Their recreational reading is largely in first-grade books and they read these easier materials for pleasure with a minimum of help.

Grouping is distinctly more flexible for the children who are the better readers. On the day of this imagined visit, two group projects are under way. The children in one group have been reading a series of animal stories in a basal reader and are now getting ready to share their reading with the rest of the class. It is to take the form of a little program. Two youngsters in this group are planning to read parts of a story aloud, and have asked for some group criticism as they rehearse. Four others are to present a story in pantomime while selected paragraphs are read aloud. They need to have their choice of selections for the oral reading appraised to make sure that the audience will be able to follow the gist of the story. These are the performers. The other children in the group have studied the same stories and are acting as critics. The teacher makes sure that this group is well under way and then leaves the children to help each other while she moves on to work with the children who make up the second group.

The children in the second group have not worked with a basal-reading series for several days. They have assumed major responsibility for finding more about how to care for the plants in the science corner. Their first step was to list, with the help of the teacher, the questions they wanted to answer. All then took a day to look through the books in

the classroom to locate information, making as much use of tables of contents and indexes as they could. They next read independently until they began to exhaust their resources. Today in the reading group they are pooling their information. Each child has come with very simple notes on what he has found. The books that were used are on the table nearby for ready reference. Over the past day or so the teacher has done little to help these children other than to check on progress and assist individuals. Now she works with them for the full group meeting, calling them together about ten minutes after the others have begun work so that she can be free from interruptions.

Later in the morning another group activity related to reading appears. This time it involves everyone in the class. The purpose is to learn to spell some of the more difficult words the children have been needing frequently in their writing. As the children discuss the pronunciation of the words and identify unusual letter combinations, they draw upon all they have learned about word analysis through their reading. Even the poorest readers know the most common phonetic elements, but combinations such as *ought, tion, ine, ight* are still difficult for many in the class and words of more than two syllables require considerable thought.

Reading is not an isolated activity in this classroom. Every situation in which children need to read contributes to their reading program. Already many of the children are beginning to read widely. Special help is planned to provide for continuity of growth in reading skill, but increasingly the demands of daily classroom activities are the determiners of what that help is to be.

This chapter gives an overview of the way in which the reading activities of the primary grades develop once children have taken their first steps with preprimer materials. First, aims to guide the choice of reading experiences of primary children are suggested in detail. Second, the types of reading activities appropriate for primary children and the changes in their interrelationships as children grow in reading skill are sketched in broad outline. Third, implications for problems of classroom organization—grouping and scheduling—are summarized. Classroom procedures suggested in this overview are discussed in detail in Chapters VII, VIII, and IX.

NEW AIMS AS PRIMARY CHILDREN GROW IN ABILITY TO READ INDEPENDENTLY

In three years, the children just described have grown from almost complete dependence upon the teacher to a marked degree of independence in reading for a variety of purposes, in locating the

information they need, in working with many types of materials, and in identifying unfamiliar words. The objectives of the primary grades cannot be listed easily grade by grade. Children will develop at different rates and meet new problems at different times. Each teacher has to make the final decisions as to when her children should be encouraged to tackle more difficult reading tasks and what help they need to meet their present reading problems. However, in the light of the ways in which reading is used in the first three grades, certain general objectives can be suggested.

Reading begins to serve a greater variety of purposes. One major objective of the primary grades is to help children extend the ways in which they use their reading ability. Even at the prereading level, youngsters are encouraged to look to experience records and picture books for help on a variety of problems. As they gain in reading skill, they need to expand the purposes for which they read. Among the wider reading purposes that should develop are the following:

First: Recreational reading should begin to provide an increasing number of satisfactions. As children gain in reading skill they should be encouraged to explore a greater number of books, both fictional and factual. If there is a school or community library nearby, they should experience the fun of selecting and withdrawing books for themselves. The typical third-grader enjoys reading for its own sake, and has wide reading interests.

Second: Children should begin to read more widely for information. From first grade through third there should be a gradual increase in the amount and variety of informational material read. Simple textbooks in social studies, science, health, language, and arithmetic should begin to be used. Children should also begin to read simple books on various informational topics. They should become acquainted with children's magazines and weekly papers. By the third grade, children should be able to use several resources to solve a problem.

Third: Primary children should make increased use of the signs and bulletins written in connection with daily classroom activities. They should become more effective in using daily notices on the bulletin board, special directions for games, daily plans, outlines of group responsibilities, and communications from other classes or from the principal's office.

Fourth: With wider reading should come increased ability to evaluate what is read. Reading tastes should begin to develop. As children begin to read for varied purposes, they should begin to gain skill in deciding on the appropriateness of what they read for their problem. They should also begin to make discriminations regarding the accuracy of what they read—to tell a factual story from an imaginative one, to appraise what is read in terms of firsthand experience.

Reading techniques begin to be adapted to varied purposes. One does not read a story for his own enjoyment in the same way that he reads the directions for playing a new game. Although children at the intermediate and high school grades face more exacting demands for flexible reading skills, it is at the primary level that they first begin to adjust their methods of reading to the ends for which they read. Among the areas in which increased skill should develop are the following:

First: Children should be able to read several pages without help in order to get the general gist of the passage. As they begin to enjoy recreational reading they should be able to read stories and even small books without much help. As they approach third grade they should seek longer books for recreational reading. They should also be able to skim simple informational materials to get the gist of the contents or to locate information bearing on a special topic. At the end of third grade the ability to read independently for the gist of simple material should be firmly established.

Second: Primary children should show gradual gains in ability to read carefully in order to follow directions or to note precise details. As they progress toward third grade, they should be able to read carefully to answer a series of simple questions raised in connection with a problem in a content field. The various classroom lists and charts should be used with more accuracy. Details upon which the plot of a story hinges should be caught. Although note-taking will be very limited in the primary grades, some children may begin to jot down important pieces of information for committee reports.

Third: There should be a gradual increase in reading speed commensurate with children's growing grasp of word, phrase, and sentence units. The problem of helping children learn to adjust their reading speed to varied purposes belongs largely in the intermediate grades when word analysis techniques and comprehension skills are better developed. However, independent reading experiences with well-graded materials at the primary level should result in a gradual increase in ability to read smoothly in phrase units. Such beginning-reading techniques as pointing, using markers, and vocalizing should gradually disappear.

Fourth: Oral reading skills should improve. As they read longer passages aloud, primary children should develop increased skill in reading with expression. With longer passages and more varied material this will involve responding to phrasing and punctuation marks, and conveying a little of the mood of the passage. Techniques such as how to hold a book so that the voice is not muffled should be learned. Above all, young children should develop the attitude that others need to understand you when you read aloud, and should learn to enjoy the experience of reading to others.

Fifth There needs to be some progress in varying reading techniques in terms of purposes This problem will be even more important at the intermediate level Primary materials are usually written in a simple narrative style that does not call for much variation in method. However, by the time children reach third grade, they should be able to sense when it is appropriate to read rapidly, and when care has to be taken to note details They should be able to glance through materials quickly to locate information and then to read carefully to get the facts they need They should experience the fun of reading recreational materials at a reasonably rapid pace

First steps are taken toward independent location of materials. A child is not truly an independent reader until he can locate his own resource materials Readers in the intermediate grades, high school and college perfect the techniques needed to do this well Primary children take only one or two steps in this direction By the time able children reach third grade a teacher should expect to help them begin to locate source materials, and then to be free to leave them to secure the information they need from the various sources confident that work will progress satisfactorily without her Among the reference techniques with which children should become acquainted are the following

First There should be growing acquaintance with the standard reference books commonly used in the room Children should know the general contents of the library corner Very early they may have experience with a small classmade picture dictionary By the third grade many will know how to use a standard picture dictionary Many third graders should have had at least casual contacts with an encyclopedia Insofar as standard textbooks are being used in the classroom they should know how to work with them

Second Primary readers should know the purposes of the major reference aids in simple books Very early children learn the purpose of page numbers Beginners also soon learn to identify the title of a story Before long they use the table of contents to find out what a book is about or to locate a special story Third graders should be able to use a table of contents without difficulty Many will also have some skill in using an index

Third Even though techniques are often crude there should be a growing disposition to search through several books for specific information and sensitivity to the appropriateness of what is read for projects on hand In the first grade children may begin by noting that a story in a basal reader gives information that is needed for a special project, or by spotting a series of new and helpful pictures on the bulletin board

Units of work in the third grade typically should demand reading from several sources.

Fourth: Primary children should be acquainted with the school or local library. Although they are not likely to use the card index to locate materials for themselves, they need to know what help a librarian can give, and they should be disposed to turn to the library for help on special problems.

The technical aspects of simple materials are handled without trouble. There is a great difference between the simple page of a preprimer and the story in a typical third-grade reader. There is also a difference between the narrative style of a first reader and the textbook in arithmetic or spelling that a third-grader may read. Primary children must learn how to work with these increasingly complex materials. If their reading matter is properly graded, the children may not actually realize that they are facing technical problems of increased difficulty. The teacher, however, needs to be alert to the fact that new problems are being introduced and to the possibility that reading difficulties may arise.

First: Primary children must become accustomed to increasingly complex sentence and paragraph structure. Paragraphs change from single sentences to groups of sentences. Where first sentences are short, those in more difficult materials are two or three lines in length. Instead of being confined to a single line, a phrase may extend to the line below, to the top of the next page, or even to the top of a page which has to be turned. Pictures no longer carry the gist of the story from page to page. Stories gradually increase in length.

Second: From first through third grade there will be an increasing number of demands to adjust to the format of different materials. Basal-reading series usually present groups of stories. In recreational reading, children may follow a single story through several chapters. Textbooks are likely to use still a different organization, with varied combinations of explanation, practice materials, and questions for discussion. Work-type materials will vary in the use of directions and in the style of practice exercises. Primary children need to be able to work with these differing types of materials.

Third: By third grade, children should use effectively the simple visual aids accompanying their reading material. Throughout the primary grades the picture is the most frequent of these. In some books authentic photographs will be used. Very simple charts or diagrams may be used to illustrate both experience records and some of the first textbooks. Often in work-type activities a sample exercise will be provided. The full complexity of the problem of interpreting visual aids will be faced in the intermediate and higher grades, but primary children should de-

velop an interest in these materials and a disposition to make use of them.

Skill in working with unfamiliar words begins to develop. An important aim at the beginning reading level is to provide for enough contacts with selected words to help children become able to recognize them wherever they are met These words are typically within the child's stock of word meanings As he grows in reading skill the primary child should amass an increasing number of words he can recognize at sight But he will not truly be independent in his reading until he can work out the pronunciation of a word for himself Skill in word analysis should be well on its way by the time a child has achieved third grade reading techniques His stock of word meanings should also increase Specifically, growth in areas such as the following should be expected

First The more widely children read the greater will be the number of words with unfamiliar meanings they encounter There will also be an increased number of new meanings attached to terms they already know By third grade a certain amount of this new vocabulary should come from the various content fields Primary children need the first hand experiences, the visual aids, and the opportunities for discussion to make these new terms real

Second Children need to expand their stock of sight words partly as an aid to wide reading and partly as a basis for the development of word analysis skills In third grade and even in the intermediate grades certain words will be better introduced and learned on a word recognition basis As increased skill in word analysis develops, these words are likely to be place names words with unusually difficult phonetic elements, or technical terms

Third There will be a gradual increase from first through third grade in the number of structural and phonetic elements recognized by the children Significant in this process should be increased interest in word parts and growing satisfaction in being able to discover new sounds and to use them to pronounce unfamiliar words independently By the end of the third grade the child who has read broadly and has been interested in the shapes and sounds of words should be able to use most of the common phonetic elements in pronouncing words He will typically continue, however, to learn new word parts as he encounters the increased vocabulary load of the intermediate grades

Fourth From first grade through third, there should be gradually increased flexibility in identifying the parts of words In the beginning, the analysis may be largely in terms of initial letters, the similarity of the word to familiar ones, and endings such as *s*, *ed*, and *ing* As a child

meets words of increasing complexity, he must be able to vary his approach. In some cases, he may use word-parts that are themselves familiar small words, in others, syllables. Sometimes he will need to pronounce a letter separately, sometimes to see it as part of a two- and three-letter combination. Most third-graders should have reached the place where they will try a second or third breakdown of a word if the first attempt does not work.

Fifth: Throughout the primary grades, children should develop increased skill in using context clues to aid in word analysis. As children grow more skilled, use of the context should become one important test of a tentative analysis. Most children will not be completely independent in word-analysis techniques when they reach the intermediate grades, but all should have varied ways of helping themselves.

These aims had their roots in the prereading program. With varied emphases they also guide the program for intermediate-grade children. Some primary children will not have achieved these goals by the end of the third grade and some will have reached the status of typical fifth- or sixth-graders. Each teacher has to be able to take the child where she finds him and to provide the experiences that are the appropriate next steps for him.

PROVIDING READING EXPERIENCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PRIMARY CHILDREN

All the reading done by a child properly can be considered part of his reading program. For the purposes of discussion, the reading activities of the primary grades can be thought of as having three aspects. First, there is direct reading instruction. This includes those activities through which children, individually or in groups, are given help specifically planned to improve reading skills. Second, there are informational-reading activities in which reading is used to solve a problem, or to advance, in some other way, the on-going plans of a group, or of an individual. Recreational reading may be considered the third aspect of the child's total reading activities. Children need the experience of reading simple, enjoyable materials just for the fun of reading and for the personal satisfactions that this experience offers. Taken together, these three types of activities provide for a flexible and varied series of reading experiences.

Actually these three aspects of the reading program cannot always be separated in practice. The children may find in a story being discussed in a group meeting for reading instruction the information needed to solve a problem arising in a social-studies unit. Time may

be taken during a planning session in a science activity to develop the reading skills required to locate needed information. A young ornithologist may find bird books a more challenging source of recreational reading than fairy stories. In their eagerness to share their recreational reading with others in the class, a group may spend several days practicing oral reading. It does not matter how a particular reading experience is classified as long as all the child's reading activities are developed in harmony for his maximum progress.

As children grow from the beginner's almost complete dependence on the teacher to the relative independence of the third-grader, there should be a distinct change in the relationships among the various aspects of the total reading program. In the beginning, direct instruction, provided individually or in small groups, needs to be planned so that it carries a large share of the burden of introducing new words and more complicated sentences and paragraphs. Even in the early first grade, however, reading problems arising from classroom experiences will often be the center of the activities of instructional groups. As children develop increased ability to read independently, informational-reading activities and recreational reading should begin to provide for a greater amount of reading experiences. Perhaps still more important, the reading problems children face during these activities should be reflected in their reading groups. How do these interrelated activities develop in the typical primary program?

Providing Needed Direct Instruction

Regular group sessions provide continuity. First-graders particularly, and the children in second and third grade who need the most help, are likely to meet regularly in relatively constant reading groups. These are the children who are in greatest need of sequential experiences with materials carefully chosen with regard to difficulty of vocabulary and of sentence and paragraph structure. Typically books from basal-reader series provide a large part of the instructional material for these groups. However, it is not always necessary, and sometimes not desirable, to follow the stories in one text from beginning to end. Other basal texts, supplementary books of the same difficulty level, experience records, and easy recreational books can all be used so that they contribute to the desired continuity of experiences.

The number of groups with relatively constant personnel in later first, second, and third grades will vary with the situation. In first

grade, few teachers work with less than three groups, and many prefer four, or five at times. Many of the same factors that influence the number of groups at the beginning-reading period continue to operate—size of class, range in reading ability, speed with which new skills are being learned, ability of children to work independently, presence or absence of personality problems, and the skill of the teacher herself.

When the increased ability of second- and third-graders to read independently is capitalized upon fully, the activities of their reading groups will include a greater number of experiences with materials other than basal-reader series. The personnel of the groups, too, will become more flexible in terms of the special projects at hand. In the third grade described at the beginning of this chapter, for example, only one group—the most retarded—was engaged in sequential study of basal readers. Of the other groups, one was working out a program based on a special set of animal stories and the second was collecting information needed for science activities. These were groups that also worked together for activities with basal readers. At another time the grouping might be in terms of interest and the total number of groups be different.

The scheduling of regular group activities in the later primary grades will follow much the same general pattern as that described in Chapter V for beginning-reading activities. Normally, a block of time in the day's program is set aside for work on skills. If several groups are meeting regularly for instruction, the teacher may schedule reading for two or more time-blocks and intersperse other types of activities. After two groups have met, for example, time may be taken for children who have been working independently to ask for needed help, or for musical activities, games, or a lunch period. Then, after children are again at work, other reading groups may meet.

As children develop greater ability to read independently, there should be more occasions when they read alone for a day or so. In this way, several groups may be actively at work without taking up an undue proportion of the teacher's total day. Then, as children venture into more extensive informational-reading activities, there should also be occasions when the teacher sets aside the work with a basal reader planned for an instructional group in order to help with the reading problems related to on-going classroom projects.

Typically, the number of such flexible adjustments will increase as children gain in reading skill.

More skilled readers undertake unit activities in reading groups. If primary children are to learn to evaluate, to read critically, and to decide when information is important, their reading experiences need to include these activities. As their reading skill increases, the members of reading groups should be helped to plan experiences that have many of the characteristics of a typical unit of work.

The heart of any unit activity is its problem-solving approach to learning. With the teacher's help, the children clarify a problem of concern to them. They lay plans for collecting needed information, for carrying out the desired activities, for preparing the exhibits, or for taking the other steps that seem necessary for the successful solution of the problem. Next they decide how to go to work, allot responsibilities, and proceed to carry out their plans. Eventually they bring together all they have done and decide how close they have come to solving their problem successfully. Depending on the problem, they may test out their solution in a new situation. This is the approach used in a primary classroom when children decide they need some new furniture for the library corner. They talk through what their problem involves. They suggest how they might go about making the furniture. They lay specific plans and delegate responsibilities. For the next several days they go ahead with their work, changing plans as new needs arise. When the furniture is completed they evaluate the total job. Is the furniture comfortable? Is it what was needed? Is anything missing? How could the work have been improved? Has anything been learned which would help in furnishing the play corner?

The activities of a reading group take on the characteristics of a unit when the children share in posing the problems around which their reading is to center, and then read to solve these problems. At first, only one story may be used. The children may leaf through the story, noting its pictures. They may list some of the things they hope to find out. All may then read silently to find as many answers as possible. Discussion next may center around pooling the information that came out of the reading. The discussion has unity for the children because their questions helped to guide it.

A little later, a series of related stories rather than a single story may be the center of a unit. The children may discuss the topic about

which the stories center. They may recall other stories on the same general theme. They may leaf through the section in the text, discussing the pictures and identifying the stories which most interest them. The reading then may take several forms. All children may read every story and share their opinions in discussion. Each child may volunteer to read a special story and report to the group. Like the third-graders described earlier, pairs of children may work on selected stories and plan for oral reading or dramatization to share their reading. Such activities as these may call for a day or more of independent reading before group sharing is begun.

Stories in basal readers are only one source of reading units. Children may develop their own series of experience records around a special class project. Plans for recreational reading may lead to a fruitful unit. Collecting information for other class problems may result in units based on nature or social-science books.

New groupings are not necessarily required when reading activities take on the characteristics of units of work. At times the same children will simply take on more responsibility for planning their work. There will be other times when children reading at different levels may work together to carry out unit activities centering around special interests. Such activities usually call for independent reading of stories on different levels selected with the special abilities of individuals in mind. It is also possible to plan so that several groups read about a single topic. Since many basal readers include sets of stories about such topics as animal life, child life in America, fantasy, and humor, it is relatively easy to provide materials on the levels desired. Such units make it possible to have certain all-class activities in the reading program even though children differ in ability.

Special adjustments in scheduling are not usually needed to allow for reading units, since they are merely a more complex group activity. However, the day-by-day reading experiences of the group may take on a new pattern. An entire first day may be spent in planning. A second day, and perhaps a third may then be given to reading to solve the problems raised in the planning session. While this independent reading proceeds, the teacher may be relatively free to work with other groups. At the next group session, time may be spent sharing the results of the independent reading. At this point the teacher's full attention will come back to the group. Reading units contribute to increased skill in independent reading. Next in importance to this contribution might well be listed that of freeing

the teacher to work for more extended periods with groups or individuals, secure in the knowledge that others in the class are engaged in worth-while reading activities.

Increased independence calls for special group activities. There will be occasions when it is important to supplement or to replace the regular activities of instructional groups with special sessions for group or individual guidance. These sessions help to provide the flexibility needed in the total reading program as children venture farther afield in their reading and encounter a greater number of special problems.

Some of the problems calling for special help are met during informational- or recreational-reading activities. It may be important to locate information about airplanes, but nobody may be very effective in using tables of contents. Writing reports on a study of community helpers may pose a special vocabulary problem. It would be fun to tell others about good library books, but how do you give the gist of a story without spoiling the ending? When our mothers visit us we should like to read them the records of our study of signs of spring, but that will take good readers. Such special reading problems will occur from the beginning, but they increase in number and complexity as children develop increased reading skill.

Special problems also arise because reading skill does not develop evenly in all children. At first all are likely to require help with many of the same words, and difficulties in reading are likely to center around similar problems. This soon changes. Among children reading the same five page story with reasonable comprehension there will be wide differences in the words they do not know. There will also be differences in children's independent approaches to these unfamiliar words. Some will use the picture as a major clue. Others will rely largely upon the context. Several may be able to use phonetic elements. One type of help in word recognition no longer serves. Similarly, there may be some children who sense the general gist of the story but do not read carefully enough to answer detailed questions. Others may find it easy to answer single questions but may need help to pull together two or three ideas into a comprehensive answer. Growth will not be regular, even though children may have worked together consistently in the same reading group.

Several types of adjustments can be made to meet special needs. Sometimes the activities of a regular reading group are planned to provide the help. Time may be taken to see how one would use a

table of contents to locate information, to learn the terms needed in order to read a series of experience records, or to work on skill in reading for exact information. Sometimes special work-type materials will be used for such activities. At other times stress may be placed on the needed skill through the materials currently being read. Stories may be read with a special eye to details; more time may be given to the table of contents when the next new book is introduced; special oral-reading experiences may be planned.

New problems are not all handled within existing groups. Regrouping in terms of special needs is possible. Other group activities in reading do not necessarily have to continue while such special groups are at work. The projects in which they are engaged may provide ample reading experience for the next few days. It is also possible for supplementary groups to meet parallel to existing groups. Children with oral-reading responsibilities for a program to entertain parents may meet for two or three days as a special practice group at some time other than regular group meetings. The entire class may have difficulty deciding how to look through several books to locate special information and all may work on the problem together. Ernie, who has been ill, may need extra help to catch up. The teacher may plan a combination of work-type activities and easy reading for him and spend ten minutes a day for two or three weeks working with him alone.

How special groups are scheduled depends on how they are related to other classroom activities. If they have replaced existing reading groups, the time normally set aside in the schedule for reading activities can be used for them. If they are running concurrently with other reading groups, extra time will need to be found. Often there is room for such activities in a time-block set aside for independent work on skills. When the special reading problem is directly connected with an on-going unit, time for help may be found during the period set aside for work on the unit. Often, too, the teacher can give a few minutes' help to a special group or to an individual child while reading groups are working independently. These adjustments will be made differently from class to class, and from day to day within a single class.

Special reading activities do not complicate the total day unduly. In the first place, not many such groups are likely to be at work at any one time. When such groups are set up, they often replace existing groups, so that the total number of different reading activities is

not always greatly increased. Then, many such special group activities are directly connected with on-going class plans. "We need to get ready for our program. . . ." "We can't go any farther with our questions until we can find. . . ." "These are good stories, when can we. . . ." Once children themselves see the need for the special activity they often carry on with a minimum of help from the teacher. Ernie works at his exercises alone. A word-analysis group learns how to play certain games and how to follow the directions in certain work-type activities without much step-by-step supervision. The pattern of reading activities that results when special needs are met is undoubtedly more complex than that in which a given number of groups work regularly with selected basal-reader series. Perhaps the best justification of the additional time and effort needed to plan such varied activities comes from teachers themselves who bear witness that a little help focussed directly on a problem at a time when it is crucial is worth many hours of practice provided when the need is not as urgent. The teacher has the responsibility, however, of seeing that such flexibility does not lead to haphazard experiences and to skills and vocabulary half learned because sufficient time is not devoted to them.

Making the Most of Informational-Reading Experiences

New skill is often best developed through informational-reading activities. From the beginning, primary children are engaged in unit activities that call for the location of information. Some of the first materials of an informational nature to be read by the children are likely to be experience records, but gradually simple stories in basal readers, easy reference books and textbooks in the various content fields begin to be used. As such reading activities become more extensive, there will need to be an increasing variety of provisions for giving help with the problems they occasion.

Grouping for the informational-reading activities connected with units of work depends partly on the interests of the children, partly on their ability, and partly on the type of reading problem they face. At certain points in the unit the entire class may be involved. As children begin to use several resource materials for information, for example, there may need to be some all-class sessions to discuss how to locate specific topics. Other parts of the unit may involve small groups. Frequently, these groups will be made up of children who have a common interest, but who do not necessarily have the

same degree of reading skill. Sometimes, if the reading task is difficult or the range of books for independent reading is limited, children may work in the same groups in which they might normally meet for reading instruction. Occasionally the children who are the poorest readers may work together as a group, while those with greater independent reading skill work in groups of their own choosing.

A number of ways in which time can be found for informational-reading experiences have already been suggested. In the discussion of special-group sessions in the preceding section, it was suggested that the time usually set aside for group reading activities may be used to give help to children facing a special problem related to informational reading. It was also suggested in the preceding section that time to work on reading problems can be provided during the period set aside for unit activities. Part of a period may be used to compose an experience record, or to practice reading a series of records aloud in preparation for sharing them with another class. Sometimes the full period set aside for the unit will be used for independent reading. On occasion, the teacher may work on reading problems with one group while others go about activities calling for construction or for drawing pictures. The total reading program is an integrated program. Help can come at many points and in relation to many types of projects.

Classroom activities provide opportunities to practice new skills. In a typical primary classroom, children engage in many incidental reading activities in the course of a day. They read group plans for the day, check on responsibilities listed on a helpers' chart, look for new items on the bulletin board, read the bill for cookies from the local grocery store. Every reading skill is represented—following directions, noting details, locating information, evaluating, skimming to get the general gist of a passage, outlining, summarizing, reading aloud.

It is not easy to point to a specific place in the schedule when incidental reading activities go on. In a classroom where reading serves many purposes, one or two children are reading at almost any time of the day. However, certain aspects of the total program lend themselves to specific types of experiences. Planning sessions or sharing periods, for example, offer opportunities for reading special announcements, for writing and reading the class news of the day, for checking daily plans, or for reading letters addressed to the group. Special planning sessions connected with developing a unit of work

call for checking records and for reading specific plans. Doing the housekeeping chores may call for following special directions for cleaning paintbrushes or feeding goldfish. Free work periods may provide opportunities to read the directions for number games, the rules for sharing the clay table, or the plans for taking care of the books on the library table. In second and third grades, an increasing number of activities in other skill areas, such as spelling or number, may call for reading of textbooks or of directions for work-type activities. Every part of the day makes its contribution.

Grouping is as flexible for incidental reading activities as is scheduling. Everyone may check on daily plans. The individuals who use the library table, the number games, or the clay table are the ones who read the rules. Everyone keeps up with the bulletin board. The functional reading matter around the classroom serves its purpose best when there are many reasons for reading and few restrictions on when, or with whom it is done.

Using Recreational Reading to Best Advantage

Recreational reading expands reading horizons for all children. Primary children need time to read for recreation. Of all aspects of the primary reading program, recreational reading is the most highly individualized. It should be an activity in which each child follows his own interests and tastes. Nevertheless, certain group experiences can be profitable. Children can be given time to recommend good books to others during sharing periods. Oral reading sessions, when a child reads a good story to a small audience, are greatly enjoyed. Unit activities developed around recreational books can help to widen reading interests and tastes. For the most part, the children who participate in such group activities are those with common interests. Each child reads his own book, and there is no particular need for him to be grouped with others who are reading materials of the same difficulty level.

Time for recreational reading needs to be definitely scheduled. Many teachers encourage children to spend time at the library table whenever they have a few free minutes, but this procedure alone does not provide for the child who works slowly and who seldom has free time, nor does it always allow enough time for better readers. Sometimes one or two recreational-reading periods are definitely scheduled during the week. Time to get acquainted with new books may be provided after a library visit, or a sharing period to tell others about

good books planned before the books are returned to the library. Unit activities centering around recreational reading can be planned for the time usually allotted to group reading experiences. Story hours can be scheduled when children read to each other, or when the teacher reads to the entire group. Such activities are important to include in the weekly schedule if children are to be encouraged to read widely for their own purposes.

Recreational-reading activities provide opportunities to help children to develop increased reading skill. Even though the materials children read for recreation are simply written, recreational-reading activities provide opportunities to help children develop increased reading skill. First-graders, especially, will need help with unfamiliar words. Even third-graders will encounter occasional words they do not know. Activities connected with sharing books with others may raise new problems. Children may also need help in locating the books they desire and in choosing books appropriate for their own reading level. Many will need to be introduced to new types of books. Then, too, the experience of reading widely, in and of itself, helps to develop increased skill.

Possible ways of scheduling time for recreational reading have already been indicated. During these recreational-reading periods the teacher is free to work with individuals—helping with a word here, asking for a comment on a book, pointing out other books that might prove interesting. Special help in preparation for book reports or for oral-reading periods may be scheduled on the same basis as other special-practice sessions.

Recreational books, then, take their place along with informational materials and basal readers as bases for reading instruction and important sources of practice. There are few clear-cut distinctions among the several aspects of the primary reading program. The activities making up the total program are as rich, as varied, and as meaningful as possible. Help is given whenever a problem arises, and is planned whenever possible in relation to specific needs. Every new gain in reading skill is capitalized upon by providing new challenges to read and more freedom to use the increased skill.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION FOR THE READING ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIMARY GRADES

The methods of grouping and scheduling described in the preceding section are flexible in order to allow for many types of reading

experiences. How is it possible to achieve this flexibility and not to have such a confusion of activities that children actually learn very little? Specific examples have already been given. This section summarizes the general principles that underlay these illustrations.

Achieving Effective Scheduling

Large time-blocks allow for varied activities. The use of large time-blocks in scheduling primary activities has already been described in Chapter V for the beginning-reading level. In later first, second, and third grades the pattern is much the same. Periods of as much as an hour, or even longer, are set aside for a series of related activities. These long periods make it possible to have a planning session with the entire class, to make sure that each child has something worth-while to do and knows how to go about it, and to spend a little time getting everyone started before any specific group work is begun. These long periods also make it possible to vary the time spent with reading groups according to the needs of each group. Then, too, in a large time-block the teacher may work with two groups at once, starting one on a project requiring considerable independent work, and then meeting with the second group for a work session while the first group reads silently in preparation for a later discussion.

Normally the day's activities will follow a fairly regular sequence. Allowing for flexibility in scheduling does not mean that all semblance of regularity in planning disappears, any more than adjusting the activities of a home to the lives of its members means that there will be no definite time for meals, for rising, or for going to bed. A well-planned program allows for emergencies while it establishes routines. As teacher and children work together, certain times will be set aside for definite activities. Evaluation and planning may come late in the day or first thing in the morning, depending on the children's abilities to keep plans in mind. Some detailed planning will almost always come immediately before an activity is begun. This helps to guarantee that individuals will be clear about their parts in activity. Time will be set aside for housekeeping chores. Definite periods will be devoted to group work on unit activities. Within this framework, one or more blocks of time will be saved, rather regularly, for individual and for group activities planned to develop basic skills in such areas as reading, oral and written expression, and number.

A typical first-grade schedule might look as follows:

9:00 to 9:50	Planning and work period. This time usually saved for strenuous work—building, playing in the playhouse, and other activities that are hard to do quietly.
9:50 to 10:00	Clean up, preparation for outdoor play.
10:00 to 10:30	Outdoor play, rhythms, or other active games; lunch, and rest.
10:30 to 11:40	Work on fundamental skills.
11:40 to 12:00	Clean up, evaluation of morning's work.
12:00 to 1:00	Lunch.
1:00 to 2:10	Sharing, planning, and group activities centering around a unit of work.
2:10 to 2:30	Outdoor play, rhythms, music.
2:30 to 3:20	Individual activities, group evaluation and planning.
3:20 to 3:30	Clean up and dismissal.

This is the schedule of an experienced teacher. Beginners might well simplify the variety of activities and the number of groups at work. Depending upon the degree to which functional classroom activities are contributing to growth in fundamental skills, more time might need to be provided for specific instruction. This schedule provides time to work on fundamental skills for the period between 10:30 and 11:40. Other activities involving reading are planned for the period between 1:00 and 2:10. These are frequently informational-reading experiences. There is also time to give varied kinds of help to individuals and to small groups in the last period in the afternoon. Occasionally the early morning period will allow time for some reading experiences or for work in number.

How might the activities of this first grade develop if one were to follow the children at work for a typical day? Four reading groups are at work.

The first hour, from 9:00 to 10.00, was usually a work period when strenuous activities connected with a unit of work were carried out. The children were concerned about remodeling their playhouse so as to have a model kitchen. The first few minutes of the period were spent checking attendance and collecting lunch money. One child at each table was responsible for telling how many children were present at his table. Later, the children helped the teacher add to see how many boys and how many girls were present, and helped her add the lunch money. Then active work on the playhouse began. The group who had volunteered to paint wallpaper worked on that. Several of the boys who had planned to make a stove and a refrigerator went to work with hammer and nails. Three of the girls laundered the curtains. Some children who wanted to plant a small window box worked with the teacher.

In the first hour, children who did not have any special responsibilities for the playhouse had notes for their mothers regarding a special program to finish copying, pictures to paint, and housekeeping tasks to carry out. Several spent time with some number games. The teacher worked with the class as a whole long enough to be sure that plans were clear and then circulated around the room, giving help as needed. The reading done during this period was an all-class activity, as the children helped to compose a short news bulletin telling what the weather was like and giving one or two other special events, checked a list of plans for the playhouse, and noted changes in the helpers' chart. On another day a reading group might meet for part of this period.

Work on various aspects of fundamental skills was the usual activity for the time from 10:30 to 11:40. During this period, practice in writing and number experiences found their place along with reading. Creative work in art was sometimes used as an independent activity for this period. On the day being described, the children undertook a variety of activities. Some worked on work type exercises in number; some had the notes to their mothers, mentioned previously, to complete; two children worked at the easel; and those in one reading group completed work-type activities prepared by their teacher and planned in the preceding meeting of their reading group.

While individual work went on, reading groups met with the teacher. She took time first to check briefly with a group of advanced readers who had a story to finish reading independently, and with the group who had the work-type activities to complete. Assured that these two groups were at work, she called a third. After work with this group was completed the teacher took a few minutes to check on the progress of other activities. Children with problems had a few of their questions answered. Those who had finished reading their story independently were reminded that they had planned to draw a picture of the part of the story they liked best. Then the fourth reading group was called. The last part of the period was spent working with the children who were completing work type activities in number.

On another day it might be important to spend more time during the 10.30 to 11:40 period with number activities, or to work as a class on thank-you notes to be written to another grade. If these activities took up a greater share of the period, group work in reading might be planned for one of the two time-blocks in the afternoon. The last period in the afternoon, particularly, allowed for a variety of additional experiences in skill areas.

Work from 1:00 to 2:10 in the afternoon usually centered around experiences with another unit of work. If the early-morning period involved construction activities, the afternoon period was likely to stress language experiences. Three times a week, the first fifteen minutes were used as a sharing period for children to talk about interesting happenings at home or to show objects they had brought to school.

After the sharing period, on the day being described, the children

discussed a recent trip to a farm. They checked the list of questions they raised before they took their trip and saw how many they could answer. The teacher helped them to make a list of the things the farmer said he did. This she later printed as an experience record. Someone suggested that they could write a whole book about the farm, and they took a few minutes to suggest what might be included. The teacher jotted down this list of suggestions for posting later. Then each child went to his table to draw a picture about the part of the trip he liked the best. Later these pictures would be given captions and posted.

During the time-block from 2:30 to 3:20 activities were largely individual, and the children turned to the easel, the play corner, and the library corner. As children became more adept at writing, this was a period when short stories were written, to be posted later on the bulletin board. In the early fall it was sometimes a period when the children told stories which the teacher took down and later mimeographed in simpler form. Dramatization and story telling were also scheduled for this period from time to time. Once a week, recreational reading was shared.

On the day being described, the teacher worked with children individually, giving constructive criticism, suggesting new approaches, and helping with special problems. Then she called together the children who had been doing work-type exercises in reading, checked their work, and introduced them to the new book they were to start to read. For the last few minutes of the period the children shared their farm pictures and checked on their plans for the playhouse for the morrow.

The general framework of a third grade schedule looks similar to the first-grade schedule that has just been described:

9:00 to 9:15	Discussion and short group planning period to clear up general problems.
9:15 to 10:30	Individual activities, fundamental skills, housekeeping chores.
10:30 to 10:55	Outdoor play, rhythmic activities, short rest period.
10:55 to 11:45	Unit activities. Devoted to individual and group work on major unit.
11:45 to 12:00	Evaluation of unit work, clean up.
12.00 to 1:00	Lunch.
1:00 to 2:10	Unit activities. Not usually a continuation of morning work but time for work on another unit.
2:10 to 2:30	Play period.
2:30 to 3:10	Individual activities, creative expression, recreational reading, some work on skills.
3:10 to 3:30	Evaluation and planning.

This schedule allows two large time-blocks for unit activities, a third for individual or group work on fundamental skills, and a fourth for various experiences with creative expression. Instructional

groups in reading, as well as group or class activities in spelling, arithmetic, and written expression are scheduled during the first long period. The special emphasis will vary with the need. Children who are not working with the teacher will be working independently on various related activities. Additional help on skills will often be given during part of the last period in the afternoon. This help will usually be on an individual basis so that the teacher is able to move about rather freely.

Groups of children concerned with reading informational materials will meet during the two periods set aside for unit activities. The entire class may take time to check on progress in informational reading. Special groups may spend a good part of the period hunting information. All may take time to work on a list of new words essential to the unit. Class records may be checked. The scheduling of this type of reading experience reflects the adjustment in emphasis needed in the reading program as more skilled readers take on a heavier proportion of reading activities related to on-going classroom experiences. If the unit in the morning were weighted with problems in the science or social-studies fields, the afternoon unit might well develop around language activities. Were this the case, the children might be engaged in such projects as reading simple reference materials, textbooks, or selected basal reader stories for information in the morning and be spending their time in the afternoon on such activities as reading aloud to prepare for a program, skimming stories to locate one suitable for a puppet show, or writing and reading their own creative stories.

Pupil-teacher planning provides for needed continuity. Time for planning and for evaluation is an important feature of the schedules that have been described. Children are able to go ahead with many types of activities without the teacher's direct supervision because they know what they are doing.

In the situations described in the preceding section, many of the class projects are developed as units of work. This means that a series of related activities can be planned. Children may have objects to make, stories to write, pictures to draw, or books to read. Planning sessions are used to outline the possibilities for such activities, to clarify details, and to check on progress. With this help, children are able to carry out a number of worth-while activities while the teacher is at work with reading groups.

Pupil-teacher planning not only guarantees that worth-while

activities will proceed smoothly while the teacher works with a reading group; it also guarantees that the work of the reading group itself will proceed smoothly. In the reading units described earlier, children are sometimes helped to lay plans calling for independent work lasting two or three days. The purposes of work-type activities can also be talked through with profit in the reading group. Practically all the descriptions of groups in action given earlier presupposed a few minutes spent in planning so that children knew what they were about.

As children carry out group plans, the teacher is free to work with the individuals or with the groups most needing her help. She does not try to direct every step of an activity. Her responsibility is to see that plans are clear, to give whatever help is needed as an activity gets under way, and then to work intensively at the points where her assistance is most important. At times this means that the teacher works with reading groups while the children who are not reading move ahead on the plans for a unit of work. At times she may work on a particular aspect of the unit. At times she makes sure that the entire class is occupied with various independent activities and then gives help to individual children.

Children develop increased ability to carry out plans independently as they mature, and as they are given successful experiences in planning. First-graders will not assume as varied independent responsibilities as will third graders. Their plans will be simpler; their ability to work cooperatively in groups will not be as well developed; their projects are likely to be shorter; and they are likely to need more direct guidance from the teacher. With increased experience and maturity should come increased ability to carry out more elaborate projects.

Independent reading ability can be capitalized upon. In the classrooms described earlier, teachers are able to make maximum use of the time they have available to give help in reading because they capitalize on children's ability to read independently. Unless her help is needed, the teacher does not sit with a group of children while they complete the reading of a story. She may introduce hard words and help the children establish some purposes to guide their reading, but then she is likely to work with another group, and to come back to the first group for a discussion period after they have finished their reading. First-graders will not be able to do as much independent reading as third-graders, but even beginners should be expected to work alone once in a while.

Part of the secret of enabling primary children to read independently is to use materials that increase in difficulty very gradually, or to provide for some experiences with supplementary books that review vocabulary that is already familiar. Recreational reading and informational reading, particularly, will go forward more smoothly if the materials available are well within children's grasp. Then, too, most children will profit from a variety of follow-up or work-type activities that call for rereading the story or for reviewing new words. These activities are usually done independently. They, also, are more readily carried out if the directions are easy to read. Children learn to read by reading. Their experiences need not be restricted to the times when the teacher is free to work with them.

Flexibility in day-by-day activities helps to increase the richness of the total reading program. Another characteristic of the schedules that have been described is their flexibility. There are no rigid prescriptions regarding the number of times during the week that a reading group meets with the teacher, the number of minutes a day to be devoted to the group, the sequence in which stories are read, or the extent to which a given group of children are to work together. As a result, considerable flexibility and variety in children's reading activities is achieved without sacrificing the continuity of experience that is important for consistent growth. After a set of stories in a basal text has been completed, the children may go to stories on a similar topic in another book, or may take time to do some extra work with the experience records developing out of a unit of work. Work in reading groups may be stopped for a time to give help to interest groups working on reading problems related to a unit. Separate groups may not meet for a day or so while the class as a whole concentrates on a special reading problem. The children in a reading group may need an extended amount of the teacher's time today in order to become acquainted with a new book. Tomorrow they may work alone. There are only a limited number of minutes in the school day. If children are to be given varied reading experiences, then schedule should be planned with the need for flexibility in mind.

Many skills can be taught in relation to the unit in which the problem arises. A typical primary program provides for one or more units of work to help children become acquainted with their physical and their social environment; gives opportunities for creative expression through art, music, and other media; provides for active play and cares for other health needs; and, in addition, allows time for the development of ability to read, to write, to speak, and to use number

concepts. At first glance, this program seems likely to overwhelm small children with the multitude of its activities. Actually this is not the case. Individual activities of a creative nature are planned for definite times in the schedule. Games, lunch, and rest periods are also scheduled on a definite basis. Many of the child's experiences in language, reading, and number are integrated with on-going unit activities. As a result, the periods set aside for work on fundamental skills carry only part of the child's total experiences with these important aspects of his curriculum.

Unit activities offer time to develop new skills, and, perhaps more important, they offer ample realistic opportunities for practice. Children write letters to a classmate who is ill. They come across words they do not know. They are given immediate help and then, after the letter is written, they may take time to add some of the most important of these words to their spelling list. Some young architects need information before they can rig the elevator in their model apartment house. For the entire period set aside for unit activities they hunt through reading materials looking for pictures and descriptions that will help. A group is making curtains for the playhouse. The children cannot measure the cloth accurately and time is taken for an arithmetic session in which they learn simple facts about using a ruler. Much valuable experience in every skill area can be secured through such integrated activities if the teacher is alert to the possibilities.

Many of the suggestions for scheduling reading experiences outlined in the preceding section take into account possibilities for integrating the reading with unit activities. Among those mentioned are: planning so that the reading group can concentrate on stories or experience records related to a unit; cancelling group activities with a basal reader in order to afford more time for informational reading; using part of the time-block set aside for unit activities to work out special reading problems related to the unit; grouping the children in interest groups to work on a series of informational-reading problems; planning for periods when help in reading is given individually as the children locate the information needed for the unit; making use of the incidental reading afforded by group plans, lists of helpers, lists of questions. "Make your time count double" is a useful motto for the elementary teacher. When the same hour can be used both to provide practice in reading and to advance the plans of a unit, time has been gained for some other experience important to the all-round development of the group.

Time to work with individuals is considered important. Teachers find time to work with individual children in the classrooms that have been described. Time is taken for a few minutes' discussion with a child during a period when the entire class reads independently; during a free work period when many types of activities are going on; in recreational-reading periods when each child is at work with his own book; as work on a unit goes forward. These short contacts with single pupils are a natural outcome of the flexible planning and scheduling that has been described. They need to be thought of as making a valuable contribution to the total reading program.

Grouping to Meet Special Needs

Children who work together most consistently are at about the same level of reading ability Reading groups, as described in this chapter, develop in terms of the needs of the situation The children who work together the most frequently are usually those of about the same level of reading ability. They may also work in these same groups when a difficult informational reading task is faced. Ability groups are used less frequently for recreational-reading activities, although certain reading units centering around recreational reading have been suggested as appropriate for group experiences. As suggested earlier, size of group and number of groups depend upon many factors in the immediate situation. No two classes will necessarily be organized in exactly the same way

In the situations described, the regularity with which groups of the same reading ability work together on sequential activities with a basal reader decreases as children become able to work independently and competent to take on other types of reading activities. This does not necessarily reduce the number of group activities under way, but it results in changes in the personnel of groups and in the focus of their activities Consistent growth in reading skill, in the classrooms described, is secured through the integration of all the child's reading experiences. The sequential activities provided for him in a reading group are not expected to provide completely for the orderly development of his reading skill.

Specific reading needs are the basis for short-term groups. A second type of ability grouping used in the classrooms that were described is the short-term group of selected children with a special reading problem—some first-graders who need a little more help with word recognition; five or six third-graders who still have not grasped the basic techniques of word analysis; several who have special trouble

taking notes in reading several books for information; three children who were ill and who need a little extra help. Special sessions with such groups for a few days, a week, or a month may often prevent serious remedial problems. Not many such groups are likely to be meeting at one time, and not all children will be involved. These short-term groups should be considered as a means of giving individualized help, should be set up when a special problem arises, and continued only until the need is met.

Interest groups are possible when materials and guidance are individualized. A number of examples of regrouping in terms of special reading interests are given in the preceding section—a group specially interested in one aspect of a unit; a book club meeting to share stories; the people who went on an excursion meeting to prepare their report; the members of the entertainment committee getting ready to read class records to their mothers. The size of interest groups, the frequency with which they meet, and the length of time they work together varies with the problem at hand. They are one important way of securing a more flexible reading program, and of making the best use of informational- and of recreational-reading activities.

All reading experiences do not call for groups. It is important to remember that considerable practice and some valuable instruction in reading can be given without setting up any groups at all. The programs described earlier make definite provision for all class experiences, such as checking plans, reading bulletin boards, discussing how to locate information, sharing library books, and reading special books bearing on a group problem. In these classrooms there are also provisions for children to work alone, not only for recreational-reading purposes, but for certain experiences related to informational reading. When all the child's independent reading experiences, as well as the times when he works in interest groups, are considered as part of his total reading program, there need not be concern if the schedule does not always allow for work in a reading group for every child in the room. There are many avenues for teaching reading, and the program is richer when they are all used.

Pupil-teacher planning makes flexibility in grouping possible. Just as pupil-teacher planning is essential in flexible scheduling, so it is the basis of flexible grouping.

A child can undertake several reading activities at the same time if he has shared in the plans. He may work with one group to com-

plete a basal-reader story and then go to a second group where he helps to locate information in connection with a science activity. If he has shared in the decision that it is important for him to have some special help in word analysis, he is ready when his special practice group is called. When he has been one of the group to suggest that it would be fun to read a story to the kindergarten children next door, he knows what kind of preparation he needs when the teacher suggests that he reread the story to be sure he can recognize all the words. In classrooms, as in life out of school, it is possible to engage successfully in a complex set of activities if one's purposes are clear.

It is important for children to learn to identify their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Many teachers are concerned because typical instructional groups, no matter how carefully named, are quickly identified by children as having the best readers or the poorest readers. The stigma of being in one of the slower groups is largely removed in a classroom where the emphasis, not only in reading but in other areas is, "Where do you most need help, and where can you help others." Each child will be in certain situations where he realizes that he needs more practice, but he will be in others where he is the leader and other children turn to him. If the emphasis is correctly placed, children can gain just as much satisfaction out of being able to plan for further help as they do out of being classified as being in "the best group."

An effective reading program is a cooperative enterprise. Teachers contribute their technical knowledge of how growth in reading takes place, their instructional skill, their knowledge of the needs of individuals, and their command of materials. The children contribute their problems and interests, their advice in laying plans, their evaluation of their own strengths and weaknesses, their ideas of how to work together to help each other. Together they develop the activities which make for the greatest growth.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING THE READING EXPERIENCES PROVIDED FOR THE PRIMARY GRADES

Are many types of reading activities being provided?

Is care being taken to integrate the child's reading activities so that he makes consistent growth in the development of skill in recognizing new words and in working with more difficult materials?

Is help in reading being given whenever a reading problem is faced?

Are children being encouraged to take on independent reading activities commensurate with their ability?

Are children being encouraged to take on more complicated and challenging reading tasks as their ability warrants it?

Are reading experiences planned in such a way that other types of important learning experiences are not curtailed?

Are reading groups flexible in terms of the needs of the situation?

Are schedules flexible so as to allow for varied types of activities?

Are children encouraged to share in planning their reading activities?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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See also the references on *Grouping, Scheduling, and Cooperative Planning* at the end of Chapter X

CHAPTER VII

PROVIDING DIRECT READING INSTRUCTION FOR PRIMARY CHILDREN

WHAT ACTIVITIES are appropriate when children who have progressed beyond the beginning-reading stage meet in groups for reading instruction? The general framework described in Chapter VI suggests that approaches to group reading activities will be as varied as the groups themselves, their needs, their interests, the materials available to them, and the reading skills of their members. Nevertheless, primary teachers face certain recurring problems for which general guides and illustrative procedures can be suggested.

First, there is the problem of equipping the classroom with appropriate reading materials. Second, the teacher must decide how to guide the work with a story or set of stories so that there is effective and purposeful reading. What help should be given with new vocabulary? How much, and what kind of, guidance is appropriate during the first reading of new materials? What would be suitable types of follow-up activities related to the new materials? How may children be helped to take on the more extensive activities of reading units? Third, there is the question of how best to give additional help to meet the needs of individuals. How and when should work-type activities be provided? How can the children themselves be helped to become aware of their needs to develop special skills? This chapter is focussed on these general problems.

Two other problem areas of concern to primary teachers are discussed in the chapters that follow. Chapter VIII contains suggestions of ways of guiding children's informational- and recreational-reading activities, and Chapter IX suggestions for helping them acquire effective word-study skills.

PROVIDING READING MATERIALS FOR THE PRIMARY GRADES

Providing the range, variety, and quantity of reading material needed for the extensive activities of an effective reading program is a major problem for most teachers. This is true even at the beginning-reading level, and the problem becomes no less acute as children progress from first- through sixth-grade reading skill. What factors might be considered in equipping classrooms with materials adequate for the reading needs of primary children?

Basal readers make an important contribution. The colorful books from basal-reading series are perhaps the best source of carefully graded materials. The stories are well illustrated, and usually grouped around topics of interest to children. They are written with careful regard for such problems as vocabulary load, sentence and paragraph length and structure, and length of total story.

The same arguments which suggest that it is desirable to use materials from several basal series at the beginning-reading level support the continuation of this policy in selecting basal readers for the later primary program. When a classroom is equipped with sets of about a dozen copies from a number of series, it is possible for children to read at different levels without being obviously behind or in advance of their classmates. This policy also provides a greater total variety of well-graded materials for all children, and it is likely to result in a greater selection of stories on topics of particular interest to a class

Basal readers need to be chosen to cover the three- to four-year range in ability that will be typical of most classes. The selection should be such that skilled readers, as well as those who are making slow progress, have available material suited to their reading level. It is important, also, to have enough material available at any one grade level to provide additional experiences for children who are not ready to undertake a harder book, and to have easy enough material available for a fresh and successful start in the fall after a summer in which reading may not have played much part. Within one school, it is sometimes helpful to come to a general agreement regarding the allotment of basal series to specific grades. Often it is possible to designate one or two series as specially valuable for children who are progressing slowly, and to hold them strictly for this purpose. Similarly, other books may be reserved for children who are making rapid progress and be used regularly in a school grade lower than that for which the book is designated by its author. Some such system guar-

antees that new and interesting materials of the correct degree of difficulty will be available for all.

Providing basal texts of varied difficulty levels is not entirely a matter of adjusting to the range in reading ability in a given class. Every reader, at times, needs to work with materials simpler than those being used to help him develop new vocabulary and master more complex sentence and paragraph structure. Recreational reading calls for easy materials; so does oral reading before an audience. First attempts at locating specific information, too, are more successful when unfamiliar vocabulary and difficult sentence structure do not complicate the problem.

The quantity of carefully graded material in a classroom can be increased by systematic purchases of sets of supplementary readers. These readers, which vary in size from small paper-bound booklets to full-length books, are designed to review the vocabulary of the basal texts. There are a number of ways in which they can be used. They provide one source of independent recreational reading. They also offer easy new materials for children who need extended experience with stories of a given grade level. Sometimes they are the texts reserved for use with the children who are having trouble with the regular materials provided for their grade. Because the vocabulary in these supplementary books is familiar, they are often useful as relatively easy reading for dramatization, oral reading, or informational-reading purposes.

Many materials for independent reading are needed. Children learn to read by reading. From the beginning it is important to have available books they can read independently. Supplementary readers sometimes serve this purpose. So do books from basal-reading series that are no longer needed for group activities. In addition, it is important to build a classroom library. Some of these books will serve for recreational-reading purposes; some will be resources for informational reading.

Because children need to be able to read independently, both for recreational and for informational purposes, many of the books in the classroom library should be somewhat easier than those used for reading instruction. The more advanced readers in the class will not suffer through such contacts with simple materials. These are the books that stimulate them to begin to read rapidly, to become adept in locating exact information, and to discover the joy of reading for recreation.

Many teachers make a policy of adding single copies of appropriate books to the classroom library on a regular basis. Care needs to be taken to secure balance between fictional and factual material, and to extend the range of topics covered by the factual material. First-graders, particularly, and less skilled readers in grades two and three can be provided with more opportunities to use books for information if some of those purchased have clear pictures which can serve as a resource. If a book is to have constant use, it probably pays to invest in a binding that will withstand hard wear. It is also possible to stretch available library funds by purchasing less expensive, paper-bound books for use on special topics, and then storing them until they are needed.

Primary children need to become acquainted with reference books. To some extent in first grade, and increasingly in second and third, simple textbooks will be available in such content fields as science, social studies, health, and safety. Often these materials, like basal readers, are purchased in sets of ten to a dozen and used with groups, rather than with the class as a whole. Such an arrangement allows even children with limited reading ability to begin to use more than one resource in solving an informational reading problem.

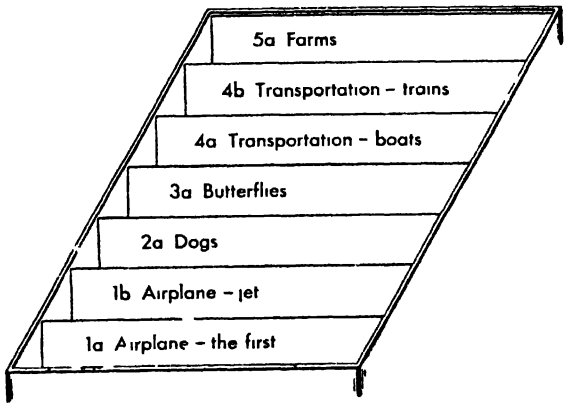
Children's encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other standard reference texts have a place, too, in the primary classroom, especially in the third grade. Picture dictionaries are useful almost from the beginning. With many groups, it will be the teacher who does most of the actual reading of such materials, although advanced third-graders often take great satisfaction in being able to read an article in an encyclopedia for themselves. It is in the intermediate grades that skilled independent use of standard reference texts develops the most rapidly.

The variety of available material is increased if pamphlets and clippings are saved. Providing sufficient material for informational reading is often particularly difficult in the early primary grades. The total supply of informational material can be increased somewhat if a systematic effort is made to clip and to save pictures and articles that give promise of remaining timely for a year or so after the date of publication. Some of these may come from adult magazines, pamphlets, and travel folders; others from children's magazines and newspapers.

One system of saving pictures and short articles is to clip each one and to mount it on heavy colored paper or cardboard. Material that needs to be folded will wear out less quickly if it and its mount-

ing are cut and hinged with tape. Folders for these materials can be classified according to topics representing typical areas of interest. A simple code of call numbers with which the folder and each article in it can be labelled is a help in keeping such a file organized.

A method of assigning call numbers that simplifies the task of keeping a file in alphabetical order as new topics are added is to put the folder for each new topic at the end of the file, giving it the next available call number, and then to keep in alphabetical order an up-to-date list of topics. Numerals may be assigned to major topics, such as animals, transportation, or weather, and the assigned numeral, together with a letter, be used to indicate sub topics. Topics selected for classification purposes need to be large enough in scope to include a reasonable body of material, but small enough to make it easy to locate needed items. A portion of the file of folders might look as follows. [1]



The list of call numbers posted near this file or, if the collection grows very extensive, kept in a card catalog, would contain all the words that might possibly serve as key words in locating materials, arranged in alphabetical order as follows:

[1] This, and subsequent suggestions on filing are adapted from Mildred English and Florence B Stratemeyer "Selection and Organization of Materials of Instruction," *Materials of Instruction*, pp 129 148 Eighth Yearbook of the Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction of the National Education Association New York Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935

TOPIC	CODE NUMBER
Airplane	
The first	1a
Jet	1b
Animals	
Dogs	2a
Boats	4a
Butterflies	3a
Dogs	2a
Farms	5a
Trains	4b
Transportation	
Airplanes (see airplane)	
Boats	4a
Trains	4b

The classroom library also can be increased if a systematic effort is made to save helpful parts of basal readers and other textbooks that have been worn out and are destined for disposal. Single stories or selected chapters from such books can be rebound with a stapled cover of colored paper and attractively titled. Several months' issues of children's weekly newspapers or magazines can be saved and bound in the same way. Mention was also made in Chapter V of the value of rebinding the preprimer being used with a reading group so that the individual stories could be made available for rereading, or for reading at home to parents. In the primary classrooms most richly equipped for reading experiences, good material is never discarded until it is completely worn out or its content obsolete.

Materials written by the teacher have an important place in the reading-matter of the primary grades. Mention has been made at several points in preceding chapters of the contribution to growth in reading made by records composed jointly by the teacher and children. Even in the third grade these records serve many purposes. Because such materials play an important part in the primary reading program, a more detailed discussion of their use is given in Chapter VIII.

Many teachers also write simplified materials for children which they mimeograph or hectograph. Some of these will be edited versions of stories the children themselves have dictated, some will be simplifications of materials found in resources too difficult for the children to read, and some may be simpler versions of fairy or folk tales needed for purposes of dramatization or of oral reading.

Typically, materials written for one class have limited value a

second year. However, there may be times when a story or chart that has proven to be particularly helpful will be saved and re-used with another group.

Available resources are used most effectively when they are cataloged systematically. A single book may serve more than one purpose. It may be an interesting story for recreational reading and, at the same time, a helpful authentic account of pioneer life. Similarly, a story in a basal reader may be helpful for informational reading, and at the same time provide recreational material about a special holiday; and a book in the public library that is difficult to read may contain excellent pictures for informational purposes. Full use of such resources can be made more readily if a systematic catalog is kept of them.

One simple method of keeping track of all available material is to develop an annotated card file, classified according to topics of interest to a given grade. The topical classification of each book or story would be placed at the top of the card where it could be seen easily. Below would be put the name of the book; the author and the publisher, the date of publication; the library call number, if the book is located in the school or the public library; and a brief annotation regarding its readability, the helpfulness of its pictures, and any special information about its appeal to children. Often a single book will require several cross reference cards. In one basal reader, for example, might be sets of stories providing information on animals, on farms, on children in other lands. A story about pioneer life might have a particularly good description of the furnishings in a pioneer home, and might also be classified as giving helpful information on transportation.

An annotated file makes available to the teacher a complete list of all the materials on a given topic to be found in basal readers, in other books in the classroom, and in the school or community library. Pamphlets and pictures stored in the teacher's materials file also may be annotated, if this is desired. Sometimes it is helpful to use colored cards to indicate the location of the material—white if it is in a basal reader, blue if it is in the school library, yellow if it is in the public library.

WORKING WITH STORY MATERIALS IN READING GROUPS

There is no one best plan for working with story materials in reading groups. At one time the children may be reading a set of stories;

at another studying a single story. Some of the material they read will be humorous, some factual, some fanciful. Some will lend itself to oral reading, some to dramatization, and some merely to discussion. The teacher's plan for the lesson or series of lessons will depend upon the nature of the material and the purposes of the group work.

Even though the exact details of a group reading session will vary from story to story, certain general steps will still need to be taken. If the material contains many new words which the children are not likely to be able to analyze independently, there has to be some plan for introducing them. There also needs to be some preliminary discussion to arouse interest and to clarify the purposes for which the children are to read. Then time is allowed for the reading of the new material. Discussion of what has been read in relation to the original purposes usually follows. Questions suggested by the story, ideas for sharing it with other groups, for reading parts of it aloud, or for locating other stories on the same topic often lead to a variety of rereading or follow-up activities. Group work has unity and interest, in terms of agreed-upon purposes, even with the simplest materials.

Giving Help with New Words

Increase the number of new words gradually. Until children have developed sufficient word-analysis skills to assure reasonable success in independent reading, it is important that the activities of their reading groups be centered around materials that introduce new words gradually and repeat them frequently. The less skilled the reader, the more crucial become the choice and control of vocabulary. However, even adults, though possessed of all the requisite skills to work out the pronunciation of new words for themselves, find the going slow and laborious if they are faced with a technical vocabulary or a series of difficult concepts in a field unfamiliar to them.

The use of the carefully constructed stories in basal readers is one guarantee that there will be reasonable control of new vocabulary. This does not mean, however, that children need necessarily follow the stories in a single reader in exact order, or keep strictly to the books in a single series. In the first place, children are, even at the beginning-reading level, working in a classroom environment designed to increase materially their total word-recognition vocabulary. There is no guarantee that the new words listed by the authors of a reader for any given story actually will be unfamiliar, or that a different story or a different reader actually will pose a more difficult word-

recognition problem. Then, the use both of standard word lists and of topics of interest to children has resulted in a certain amount of common vocabulary from series to series.[2] In addition, as children develop word-analysis skills, they should be expected to attack new words independently, and the presence of a few added word-study problems should not complicate their task unduly. Furthermore, the purpose for changing the order in which stories are read, or for shifting to books from other series often is to locate materials appropriate to a given topic. If this is the case, the fact that the children are working with several stories related to one topic is likely to result in a certain amount of common vocabulary. This vocabulary may also be repeated in experience records, or in other classroom projects centered around the same topic. Finally, the proportion of new to familiar words even may be reduced if a group moves from a basal reader to a supplementary book which repeats familiar vocabulary, or to a somewhat simpler basal reader from another series.

If children are to make satisfactory progress in learning to read, teachers must be concerned about the amount of new vocabulary and the rate at which it is introduced. However, procedures for achieving control of new vocabulary should be guided by the abilities, backgrounds, and needs of the group, not by the technical aspects of the construction of a basal-reader series alone. The less able the group, the more important the sequential development of vocabulary in a single series may be.

Introduce new words ahead of time if difficulty is foreseen. When it is apparent that a number of new words are likely to make the reading difficult, they can be introduced before the story or the group of stories is read. How much time is spent on this activity and how it is done depend on the particular situation. Typically the new words are presented in such a way that the children have an opportunity to see them clearly and to think about their meanings. With a group skilled in word analysis, the teacher may merely list the new words and see how many of them the children can work out for themselves. If the pictures in the story are appropriate, they are sometimes used to develop new meanings, and the new terms are written on the board as they are identified. Sometimes a short paragraph containing the new words is written on the chalkboard and discussed. Occasionally an

[2] For helpful discussions of vocabulary load, see Edward W. Dolch, *Teaching Primary Reading*, pp. 251–277. Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1950. Clarence R. Stone, *Progress in Primary Reading*, pp. 98–136. St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company, 1950.

excursion or an exhibit precedes the story, and the new vocabulary is developed out of this experience. The preliminary discussion, extensive or brief, should serve to call children's attention to the configurations of the new words, to develop their meanings, and to do this in a setting that enriches the approach to the story.

Encourage independence whenever possible. In their zeal to make learning to read interesting and enjoyable to children, teachers should not be tempted to give more help with new words than is necessary. Children need the experience of solving word-study problems for themselves. From the beginning they may gain considerable independence by adept use of context and picture clues. As their skill in word analysis grows, they need to be encouraged to use it. Further, children who read widely add to their word-recognition vocabulary so rapidly that extensive preliminary word study activities are very likely to take up an undue amount of time on words already familiar to many in the group.

A safe rule, in planning word-study activities prior to the reading of the story, is to allow as much independence as possible. Difficult to-analyze key words on which the meaning of the story hinges could well have some attention. So could unusual proper nouns. Context and picture clues need to be considered. For example, the word *flowers* would not be difficult if it were written in a sentence in which the other words were familiar and accompanied by an illustration of a boy with some pictured seed packages in his hand. *Ball* would be relatively easy in *Betty threw the* ——— *to Jim;* but it would be difficult in *Betty's* ——— *is on the table.* The children's word-analysis skills also need to be considered. Teachers should expect to spend relatively more time in preliminary word-study activities with children of first-grade reading ability than they would with typical third-graders. Special study of new words is, in a sense, a crutch, to be discarded gradually as children develop ways of working out their word-study problems for themselves.

Provide help as the story is being read. More opportunity can be given to a child to try his wings in word recognition if help is available when he gets into trouble. Individual assistance with new words can be given most easily if the first reading of the story is silent. The teacher can then work with a child quietly while the others read. Some teachers move about the group, giving help as children put their fingers under words they do not recognize. Others have the children come to them. Spelling a word for the teacher, letter by

letter, is usually discouraged because of the poor habits of word analysis that are likely to develop. The amount of help needed will vary with the ability of the group. First-graders are more likely to need the teacher near at hand than are third-graders. More skilled readers may be encouraged to do the best they can from context and word analysis clues and to make individual lists of difficulties for later group discussion Sometimes plans can be laid so that children help each other. They can, with a little encouragement, become adept at giving each other clues for word analysis purposes without telling the exact pronunciation of the word.

The help with a new word given to a child who is in the midst of reading a story should be reasonably prompt. However, this does not mean that he is merely told each word with which he has trouble Eventually he must learn to puzzle them out for himself and the aid he is given should teach him how to go about it. A brief pause for a word study problem will not destroy the continuity of the story Sometimes the child can be reminded of the previous setting in which he met the word Sometimes he can be helped to use a picture or a context clue. For more skilled readers the teacher may write the word on the board or on a pad of paper, and give a little help with word analysis Typically, after a child has figured out the new word, he is asked to read it in context to be sure it fits Whatever the exact nature of the assistance, it should have a dual emphasis first, can you figure it out for yourself, and second does the word you arrived at make sense in the story?

Provide additional experiences to review new words. How easily children assimilate new words depends partially on how thoroughly familiar they are with the old ones in the same story setting. Once a word has been introduced, review should be provided to help the children remember it Sometimes the teacher may close a group session by a brief review of the words for which help has been requested. Many of the follow up activities described later in this section provide an opportunity to reuse new vocabulary as the story is reread for specific purposes. Classroom experience records may sometimes review new terms It is also possible to plan work-type activities to focus specifically on new vocabulary, such as those described in Chapter IX In addition it is important to capitalize on the typical construction of primary materials. There will be many times when the best review will come through meeting the new words again in a different story setting.

Guiding the Reading of the Story

Make it easy to read together. The same arrangement of chairs in a circle used for group work in beginning reading is helpful throughout the primary grades, and even into grades four, five, and six. Because the chalkboard is a useful aid to word study, the reading group is often situated near it. However, this arrangement is not always the most effective. Children who are working with heavy books or unwieldy materials may be better located around a table. If a group is reading library books, it may be convenient to work in the library corner. Once children have reached the point where they are relatively independent of the teacher in their work with new words, they may do their first reading of a story at their desks and then come to the group for discussion. There may also be times when three or four groups will be at work in different parts of the room while the teacher moves from one group to another.

The role of pupil-teacher planning in assuring the uninterrupted progress of the work of the reading group while other classroom activities also move ahead in a satisfactory fashion has already been described in Chapters V and VI. Work with other projects can be facilitated if the reading group is located at some distance from the point of greatest activity. It is helpful, also, if all children, including those in the reading group, make a practice of using relatively quiet voices.

Establish purposes for reading. Intelligent reading is purposeful reading. A first step, when a group starts to work with a new story or with a series of stories, is to make sure that interest in the story has been developed and that there are some agreed-upon purposes for reading. This usually means that a little time is taken to talk about the story before the reading begins. Occasionally the teacher takes the lead in raising questions, or writes a series of questions on the board. More frequently purposes are arrived at jointly. Often the title of the story or the pictures are used to stimulate discussion. "Here is a story about animals in the circus. Can you guess which ones?" "Our new story is called *An Adventure*. Does anyone know what an adventure is?" Sometimes the reading activities are planned around a holiday or a special event and the discussion helps to build background. "What does Hallowe'en make you think of?" "Here are some Hallowe'en stories. Let's see which one looks the most interesting." Sometimes the story is chosen because it contains

information needed for a unit of work. "We've been talking about people who help us. Here is a story about one of them." Often the story is one of a series all bearing on the same general topic, and the children are helped to recall what they have already read. "Which of our make-believe stories have you liked best, so far?" "Here is another" Often the children will have closed their discussion of the preceding story with a forward look, which they now recall.

Out of the introductory discussion should come some definite questions to point up the reading to follow. These questions should be thought-provoking, and they should, in most cases, be rather general. Ideally, no two stories will be handled in exactly the same way. Teachers sometimes feel that they have not done full justice to a story unless the children are led to answer a carefully planned series of detailed questions. But this is not the only kind of reading children need to learn to do. They also need to discover that different types of stories can contribute to different kinds of interests; that one can read rapidly if one is concerned with the general gist of the story, but that one must go more carefully if detailed information is required. Variety in approaches to new material is important, even for beginners. As the materials themselves become more diverse, the purposes for which they are read also need to be expanded.

Plan for silent reading before oral work. Children who are trying to find how a story got its name, to discover what the children in the picture are doing, or to enjoy a story because it looks exciting or humorous, are going to need time to read before much discussion is possible. This reading needs to be done silently, so that each child has the satisfaction of getting the gist of the material for himself without the distraction of trying to follow, line by line, as someone reads aloud and perhaps destroys the sense of the passage by stumbling over hard words. Even beginners can be given the satisfaction of finding answers for themselves, though they may read only two or three lines. Typical third graders should be able to read a story several pages in length, and on many occasions be able to read a set of several stories with relatively little page-by-page guidance.

At first glance, an assignment to read a complete story may seem to be a rather heavy one for a primary child. However, basal readers are well designed to make such an undertaking possible, almost from the first. Stories increase in length gradually and, especially in the beginning, they are planned so that the picture and context on

a single page provide a unified center for discussion. Even at the end of the third grade, a story in a typical basal text is not often more than ten or twelve pages long.

If the assignment of the complete story seems too heavy, it may be broken into smaller parts. Here the format of primary materials again offers help, since longer stories are often divided into subsections with special section headings. Sometimes it is even desirable to guide children's reading over one or two paragraphs at a time. When a story is broken into smaller parts, the teacher usually asks rather specific questions and allows time for a little discussion of each question. These need to be planned so that each succeeding question helps to develop the gist of the story, and makes its contribution to the original purposes. Often the pictures are used as an aid in maintaining interest. "It looks as if we're going to learn a lot about farms as we read this story. Let's find out, first, who went. Read the first page and see." "How do you think they got there? Did they take a bus?" "It certainly looks from the picture as if they rode in a car. Suppose you read the second page and make sure." "What kinds of things might they see on the way? Read the next two pages and watch for all the things they saw." . . . "Tell us one thing, Janet."

Whatever the amount of material read, it should have some unity within itself. An adult does not get much satisfaction from his reading if he is required to lay down his book in the middle of a paragraph. Neither does the child who is required to stop reading merely because he has come to the bottom of the page, or because the time allotted to his reading group has been used up. It is important, also, to remember that the objective of the reading program is to develop skill in independent reading. Children should not be impeded in their efforts to forge ahead by themselves by unnecessary questions and discussion. There are many opportunities to talk after the complete story has been read, and follow-up activities can be used to provide needed experiences in reading aloud, in reviewing new words, or in noting details.

The longer the passage read silently, the more likely it is that one or two children will finish well ahead of the group. There are several ways in which the time of these rapid readers can be used to advantage. Sometimes the child who finishes early can be given a few minutes' extra help with words that caused him trouble. If his tendency is to skim carelessly, he may profit from a little quiet dis-

cussion with the teacher to check on the thoroughness with which he has read. Often the original plans will include specific steps to be taken after the first reading is done. The rapid reader may proceed with these. "If you think it would make a good play, suppose you look back over it and think about the scenes we would need." "Remember, we were going to read the part that was the most exciting." Often the group proceeds to the discussion of the story before the slowest readers have quite finished. These children then complete the reading at their leisure.

With more skillful readers, introducing, reading, and discussing a story may not all be completed on the same day. Varied other possibilities were suggested in Chapter VI. Most of these assume that the children's reading experiences will be the most fruitful when the teacher capitalizes to the fullest extent upon their ability to read independently and to carry out relatively complex group plans. Typically, the greater the amount of independent reading planned for the group, the easier it is to occupy the child who reads rapidly. He may go on to some other part of the plan for the group reading activity; or he may proceed to his share of the plans for a social-studies or science project, continue with some recreational reading, engage in number activities, or take other steps to carry out his part of the class plans for the day.

Discuss what is read in the light of original purposes. Silent reading of a story needs to be followed by a discussion of what has been read. This may take place during the same session in which the story was introduced, or later, depending on the maturity of the group and the elaborateness of the original plans. Discussion needs, first, to focus on the purposes that guided the reading. "What did you find out?" "How many know, now, how the story got its name?" "We were wondering what was so important about the little dog. Did the story tell?" "Do you think this was a good Hallowe'en story?"

In a typical reading-group situation, discussion then branches out to other aspects of the story. Some of these may be suggested by the children as they tell what they found, ask questions, or comment on parts of the story. Some questions will be raised by the teacher. When there is a dispute about facts or interpretations, the children turn back to the book. "There's another reason for the name of the story. Look on page 25." "Jack says it took all day to get to town, and Barbara says it was only two hours. Who is right?" "We said we

would watch to see just what a corral looks like. Who can read the part that tells?"

Many opportunities for small amounts of oral reading occur during the discussion of a story. Children may read the sentences that support their points of view. If they are discussing the humor or the suspense in a story, they may read the parts they thought to be the funniest, or the most exciting. They may find and read key pieces of conversation. If the story has introduced some new words, they may take time to read the sentences that contain them.

In the interest of vocabulary development and accurate reading, it is sometimes a temptation to prolong the discussion of a story until all details have been covered and all new words re-used. Often the discussion is followed routinely by reading the entire story aloud. Such intensive study is not necessary. No single story is meant to guarantee accurate subsequent recognition of each new word or phrase. Furthermore, most primary materials are written with a simplicity of plot and style that yields only limited possibilities for truly interesting discussion. Many of the follow-up activities discussed in the section that follows will provide more vital reasons for rereading than detailed analysis of the story itself.

Help the children become sensitive to reading skills as they work. Even a beginner is more likely to be able to solve his own reading problems if he knows what skills he is trying to develop. Part of the discussion that accompanies the reading of a story should focus on what it means to be able to read. In a group of beginners, one is likely to hear, "We start at this side." "Watch that you don't skip a line." "That's almost the right word, but not quite; look very carefully at the way it starts." Third-graders may be discussing how and when to skim, what might help in finding specific answers to questions, or how to read aloud with expression.

Some consideration of how to read may be included as part of the introductory discussion of a story. "Suppose we all read it quickly, first, to see what happened." "Since we want to decide which story to read for our party, what should we think about as we read?" "When we finish reading let's try to make a list of all the animals they saw. Read carefully so that you don't miss any." Misinterpretations and incorrect answers can lead to further consideration of how to read. "How might you have told that the word couldn't have been *swimming?*" "Read it the way you would say it to your mother, so we'll know someone is talking." "John, did what you read really

answer our question?" Children will often make their own discoveries. "People who read with their eyes and not with their lips go faster, don't they?" "I could tell from the picture." "I knew that word because it begins like *fast*." All such comments represent growing insight into the reading process.

Providing Follow-up Activities

Use follow-up activities both for group and for individual experiences. Work with a new story does not always end when its general contents have been discussed in the reading group. There are often values to be gained from activities that call for the child to rework some of the material for a new purpose. Some of these follow-up experiences will involve the cooperative efforts of the entire group, as when the children decide to read the story aloud to another group, to dramatize it, or to read other stories on the same general topic. Some will lead to independent reading. Some will be of a work-type nature where the children answer questions based on the story, draw pictures, or work with selected words or phrases. Some follow-up experiences will call for several days' effort on the part of the group, some may require an additional period of independent work, some may be planned as a quick review for the last few minutes of the group reading period.

While there are many values in follow-up activities, they should not become a routine way of ending the reading of every story. Many times the intrinsic interest in a selection will be exhausted by the time the first lively discussion of its contents has ended. It may not lend itself particularly well to oral-reading activities, and there may be little in it to stimulate further reading. When this is the case, it is likely to be more beneficial to the group to proceed to another story, or to another set of stories. The practice of giving routine seat-work assignments to beginning readers was questioned in Chapter V. This practice is even less justifiable, if that is possible, in the case of more skilled primary readers who could be using the time with profit in many independent reading activities for informational- or recreational-reading purposes.

Use oral reading for follow-up purposes. Primary children enjoy the experience of reading aloud. This is typically more satisfactory as a follow-up activity after the children have become familiar with the story through silent reading than it is as an introduction to a new story. A certain amount of oral reading, as has already been

mentioned, takes place during the discussion of the story as the children read the sentences that prove their points, read the answers to questions, or share parts of the story that they liked particularly.

Follow-up activities can be planned to provide more extensive opportunities to read aloud. One of the simplest of these is for the group members to take turns reading the story aloud, just to see how well they can do it. At other times, stories may be practiced in reading group and then taken home to be read to parents. Children also enjoy sharing a story with others in the class. Some of the most effective of these sharing situations are those in which a child reads to a small group of three or four other children. In one second grade, a boat was built out of large blocks as part of a study of transportation. For several weeks, children who were prepared to read a story signed their names on a special sheet and "boating parties" of five or six children were allowed to climb into the boat to listen. More elaborate oral-reading presentations may be planned with the whole class as an audience. There may also be times when the members of several reading groups work together on an oral-reading program to show their mothers how well they can read, or to entertain another class. During the spring, the members of one first grade took particular pleasure in reading their favorite stories to the kindergarten children.

Dramatization offers another follow-up activity of an oral nature. Typically, no effort is made to have the children memorize the words of the book, and the dramatization becomes a creative effort on their part. Sometimes the children merely take a little time as they conclude the discussion of a story to act it out. More elaborate plans may call for rereading the story to decide what scenes might be appropriate and what characters would be needed in each scene. Children may also have valuable rereading experiences as they make sure just how a giant, a policeman, or a frightened little rabbit would behave. At times, oral reading can be combined with dramatization by having the children read the parts of the characters or by having the story read while it is acted in pantomime. Puppet shows may also be developed.

Primary children need experiences with poetry as well as with prose. At first these may come through group activities with finger plays, nursery rhymes, and other poems that the children know from memory. Reading a poem aloud is a difficult oral-reading skill. It

requires sensitivity to meaning and ability to avoid a sing-song rhythm. Because the reading task is difficult, primary children's work with poetry often involves partial memorization of the poem. They may begin by listening to the poem as the teacher reads it. After they have discussed its meaning, they may perhaps talk about lines that paint pictures, or about phrases they particularly like. As the teacher reads the poem again, they may say some of the lines with her. Sometimes they may act as the chorus and give the closing lines, or repeat a refrain. Gradually, as they become thoroughly familiar with the poem and sensitive to the phrasing that conveys meaning, they may take turns reading or reciting it. Various choral-speaking arrangements are also possible. The boys may say one stanza and the girls the next. A child, or the teacher, may read a solo part and the entire group come in with the refrain. Sensitivity in the interpretation of poetry does not develop through isolated contacts with the poems in basal readers. These activities need to be supported by many experiences of listening to poems read by the teacher, of reciting favorite rhymes, of writing poems and listening to the creative efforts of others.

The larger the audience, the more important it is to safeguard a child against the embarrassment of making mistakes when he reads aloud. Often the members of the reading group who are preparing the story can form a helpful but critical audience for each other. Since all are involved in the final production, no one minds much being given a suggestion about how to improve. Often skilled third-graders can work with each other in small groups with very little help from the teacher. It is possible, also, for the teacher to work individually with a child who seems unusually self-conscious. Sometimes the shy child is helped if he reads from behind a curtain in a make-believe radio or television performance. He takes courage, too, if he is one of a group, all of whom have part in the presentation.

Even with primary children, the teaching emphasis in preparation for oral reading can go well beyond accurate word recognition and good expression. Other problems may involve deciding how to cut a long story, where to break a story if several children are reading in turn, how to set up scenes for dramatization, at what point to stop reading if you wish your audience to read the story for themselves. Many of the skills needed for effective oral reading are difficult for children to attain until they have developed the comprehension and word-study techniques of intermediate-graders. Primary

teachers will find further suggestions for developing oral-reading skills in Chapter XII.

Stimulate wide reading through follow-up activities. There will be times when work with a group of stories in a basal reader will lead to a request for opportunities to do further reading on the same topic. This type of follow-up activity may result in a series of group experiences with new stories, or in a variety of independent reading experiences. Sometimes the children will be stimulated to do some creative writing of their own. Children in one class found in a set of supplementary readers a series of stories about American children similar to those that they had just finished in their reading group. Since these were easy books, each child chose the story he liked best, read it independently, and then read selected parts of it to the group. Members of another group went on from a set of "just for fun" stories to dictate their own to the teacher. These she hectographed in slightly edited form and gave back for the group members to read independently. Activities such as these add vitality to the materials in basal readers and help immeasurably in broadening reading interests and tastes.

Make use of selected follow-up activities of a work-type nature. From time to time it may be appropriate to use, after the reading of a story, a series of review activities developed with flash cards, or phrased in multiple-choice, true-false, or matching form. Among the most stimulating may be the quick reviews of new words or of key phrases planned for a few minutes of the reading-group session. A number of the devices suggested in Chapter V for beginners easily can be adapted for use with older children. Other word study activities are described in Chapter IX.

Pictures can continue to provide interesting work type experience beyond the beginning-reading level. The children may illustrate the parts of the story they like best, and bring their pictures to the reading group for others to identify. They may decide on scenes appropriate for a play and then draw them. They may illustrate given sentences or paragraphs. As they become more skilled in written expression, they may add their own captions to their pictures, or write their own synopses of the part of the story they are illustrating. Sometimes a group may develop a bulletin-board display, using pictures from its favorite stories.

Activities that ask direct review questions about the contents of a story can be made more interesting if a definite challenge or puzzle

element is provided. Riddles referring to key characters are more exciting than yes-no questions. Various ways of numbering or of drawing lines may be used to match a character with a special action or event, or to match a new word with the part of the story to which it belongs. Sometimes the children can be given word cards and pictures to match, or work-sheets to be cut up and repasted in the correct order. New vocabulary may be sorted into interesting categories—words that tell about the farm; and words that tell about the city. Questions regarding the general gist of a story can be more interesting if the task is to put a series of sentences in their correct order or to rearrange a series of phrase cards. Even a new device for indicating a correct answer can enliven a set of questions—if the little dog was lost, draw his picture; if he was not lost, draw his home.

Plan so that follow-up activities focus on a variety of reading skills. Just as stories themselves can be used to develop a variety of reading skills, so follow-up activities can be planned to focus on many different skills. The suggestions that follow indicate typical experiences that help to develop specific skills. Some of these call for rereading the story for various purposes; some are special work-type activities based on the story. To these suggestions should be added the special activities related to the word-study program described in Chapter IX. There are also suggested, in Chapters XI and XII, a number of more advanced activities for skilled readers. In addition, teachers will find many more suggestions in the workbooks and the manuals accompanying basal readers. Some of the activities that follow are simple enough for first-graders. Some are more appropriate for skilled third-graders. Teachers will need to select and to adapt in terms of the abilities of their groups.

Critical evaluation is called for in: Rereading to decide on the appropriateness of a story for dramatization or for reading aloud to another group, choosing from a set of stories the one that is most appropriate for sharing with another group; deciding whether a story is real or fanciful; checking the information in a story against that gained on an excursion; discussing the accuracy of the illustrations; deciding which of a series of stories is the most exciting, the most humorous.

Reading for the general gist of the story is called for in: Rereading a story to decide on scenes for dramatization; skimming a series of related stories to locate more material on a given topic; telling whether the characters in a story were sad, happy, worried; planning how to tell a story to another group; suggesting another title for a story; placing a series of events from a story in the correct order; drawing a series of

three or four pictures to illustrate the plot of a story; reading a set of stories to decide which one to share with another group; deciding what parts of a story can safely be omitted in planning for oral reading or dramatization; writing one's own ending for a story.

Reading with careful attention to details is needed in: Answering specific questions based on the story and phrased in multiple-choice or true-false form; describing the costume or the manner appropriate for selected characters for a dramatization; drawing an accurate picture illustrating part of a story; making a list of facts learned from the story; making accurate statements as a story is discussed—telling correctly what happened next, how people felt, what an unfamiliar object looked like, exactly what the sequence of events was; matching a series of phrases to the appropriate characters; answering riddles; labelling a classroom exhibit or attaching appropriate captions to pictures developed out of reading-group activities; following group plans for producing a puppet show, dramatizing, playing a game.

Adjustments of reading speed are needed in: Reading a story for its general contents and then rereading to answer a specific question; following a rapid reading of the story with a work-type exercise that asks for specific details; going back over a story slowly in order to draw a picture or to describe a character; leafing through several stories to find one of interest and then reading it with care; rereading a story quickly to locate a specific piece of information, and then reading the information carefully for correct details.

Oral-reading experiences are afforded through: Reading specific points to answer a question or to support a statement; sharing in rereading a story, just for the fun of reading it; reading passages in answer to questions about what people said or how they felt; reading a story to another group, reading aloud as part of a dramatization; reading the phrase or the sentence that contains a new word; reading original stories to classmates.

New vocabulary is developed through: Using pictures to help interpret new words; sharing in discussions which make use of new words as an aid to understanding the story; rereading sentences that contain new words; drawing pictures to illustrate sentences containing new words, classifying new words under categories appropriate for the story; answering multiple-choice questions in which possible choices make use of new words; answering or preparing riddles built around new words; working with flash cards in reading groups; helping to develop illustrated word lists or picture dictionaries.

Reference techniques are needed for: Examining the table of contents in a new book; using section headings to identify the parts of a story, using titles to identify groups of stories; skimming the titles of stories in a new book to find those appropriate for a special problem; discussing the title of a story as an aid to deciding what it will be about; using the pictures as an aid to interpreting context and to recognizing new words.



Marsh

Basal-reader materials lend themselves to many types of follow-up activities. A good imagination is all it takes to make a story come alive. (Copyright 1954, Board of Education, Cincinnati, Ohio.)



Mendel Sherman

By late first grade many word analysis techniques have begun to develop. It's fun to test your skill by helping to build lists of words beginning with the same sound. Finding in a long word a small one which you can both hear and see can be another aid in working out words for yourself. (Copyright 1953 Board of Education Cincinnati Ohio

Broad interests in reading are developed through: Comparing several stories in reading group; participating in sharing periods where other groups tell about their favorite stories; reading additional stories on a topic of interest; sharing in group activities where stories are related to special events, such as Thanksgiving; working with stories in such a way that elements of humor, fantasy, excitement are highlighted in group discussion; preparing an illustrated booklet based on favorite stories to be sent to a child who is ill; writing or dictating creative stories after interest has been stimulated by a topic in a basal reader.

Developing Reading Units

Capitalize on increased reading skill by encouraging more complex activities. Reading units, calling for work with a series of stories, were proposed in Chapter VI as a means of capitalizing upon increased ability to read independently. As these activities were described in that chapter, they are not essentially different in character from those that would be planned around a single story. Whether one story or several are involved, there needs to be discussion to clarify purposes for reading. Children still need time to read the new materials independently. The discussion that follows the reading, and the plans for follow-up activities are, in a sense, culminating experiences that give unity to the enterprise, no matter how large a block of material has been read. Good teaching achieves the essential characteristics of a unit of work—the planning and purposing, the carrying out of plans, and the sharing of results—however limited the scope of the activity.

Work with sets of stories can be developed in many different ways. Perhaps the simplest approach is to capitalize upon the grouping already provided in basal readers. Typically, several stories are classified under a common topic. Sometimes the same characters appear throughout the entire section. These groupings make it easy to help children to establish interests that carry through several days' work—we follow our characters from story to story; as we read each new story about transportation we talk about the additional information we have acquired; we compare what we like about each new fanciful story with what we enjoyed about the one preceding. Out of the children's interest in the series of stories can come plans for related follow-up activities, and perhaps for a more elaborate culminating activity. As a set of animal stories is read, a bulletin board of pictures brought by the children may be planned; they may plan a Pet Day when they talk about their pets or even bring some

of them to school; they may develop their own creative stories about animals, or compose several group experience records. As the block of stories is completed each child may select his favorite to read to others in the class; the group may develop a display of its illustrations of favorite stories; a dramatization or a puppet show may be planned; perhaps parents or other classes may be invited to the program. Parallel with the group activities there may be independent work with library books about animals.

All-class units may be developed by using sets of stories on related topics. For example, all reading groups might have been involved in the unit on animals just described. Each would work with the stories in the appropriate section of its basal reader. All might share in plans for a bulletin board, or for a Pet Day. As a culminating activity, each group might share the story it liked best, or devise a means of telling about several stories or of reading appropriate passages.

As children become more skilled, there should be more flexibility, both in the choice of materials for the unit activities and in the ways in which the reading is done. To be able to read a story independently and to report on it to one's group, or to be able to read several stories and to select the one best suited for a particular purpose, represents a distinct advance in reading skill. Children should be encouraged to undertake such projects.

Late in the year a recreational-reading unit was developed with a group of the most advanced readers in a first grade. The children were becoming interested in library reading and their teacher felt that time would be well spent encouraging them to explore independently. Accordingly she brought to the reading group an armload of attractive books, some of which were easy picture books and a few of which were of second-grade level. Among the collection were readers from supplementary series and a few from basal reading series that were not being used for instructional purposes. Several *Little Golden Books*,[3] some *Little Wonder Books*,[4] and some of the easiest *Walt Disney Story Books*[5] were also included. Since the children had been dictating classroom records about spring, they had the vocabulary they needed to read *Spring Is Here*.[6] Their teacher

[3] Published by Simon and Schuster, Inc.
[4] Published by Charles E. Merrill Company.
[5] Published by D. C. Heath and Company.
[6] Bertha Morris Parker, *Spring is Here*. Basic Science Education Series. Evanston: Row Peterson and Company, 1948.

also added simple picture stories such as *Come to the Zoo,*[7] and such popular tales as *Cowboy Small* [8] and *Angus and the Ducks.*[9]

The first group session was spent informally at the library table while each child examined the books and the teacher told a little about some of the stories. Eagerness to read ran high, and the second day was spent selecting books and starting to work. Some children settled down with their first choices, while others sampled three or four. The teacher moved about the group, chatting about the various selections, giving help with unfamiliar words, and working with the children who had the most trouble locating the book they wanted. For the next three days everyone read independently. In this time the most avid readers were able to complete one short book and to start on a second. While this independent reading was going on, the teacher was free to give a little more time to other reading groups. The group sessions that followed gave each child an opportunity to tell briefly about his book. The last group activity in this unit consisted of an oral-reading session when each child read parts of his story to members of the class who were particularly interested, but independent library reading proceeded with vigor for the remainder of the year.

Stories from several basal readers may be used in a reading unit. A second-grade group became interested in a small number of humorous, fanciful stories in one basal reader. They asked if they could do more reading along the same line, and were able to locate similar stories in two other readers. In the discussion of how to get the most out of the materials available, the children suggested that each might read the story he thought was the most interesting and then share it with the group. The next few minutes were spent looking at the pictures and leafing through the stories. By the end of the period everyone had indicated his first choice. It was decided that each child would read his story silently first, and that children reading the same story would then get together and decide how to present it to the group. The next day's work was almost entirely individual. Group discussion took just long enough to make sure that each child remembered what story he had chosen. On the third day, the children decided on their contribution to the final program. There were two groups of three children each, one pair, and two children

[7] Ruth M. Tensen, *Come to the Zoo.* Chicago: Reilly and Lee Company, 1948.
[8] Lois Lenski, *Cowboy Small.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1949.
[9] Marjorie Flack, *Angus and the Ducks.* New York: Doubleday and Company, 1946.

who worked alone. The teacher met with groups and with individuals to check on plans and to make suggestions. Some children planned to read aloud, some to draw pictures about their stories and to share them, and one group to put on a short dramatization. For the next two days the small groups worked on their parts of the program, with the teacher acting as a special critic. Next, time was taken within the group for the presentations of the stories. Later the most interesting stories were shared with the class as a whole. This ended the unit, but many children went back to the readers to read independently the stories that interested them the most. They also found in several supplementary books a number of similar stories which they read for recreational purposes.

Reading units can sometimes parallel unit activities in other areas. In a third-grade class a science project connected with the children's interest in signs of spring was launched. Parallel to this was planned a reading unit which involved the entire class. With the teacher's help, and a list of definite topics worked out in a planning session, the children hunted through library books, basal readers, and supplementary readers looking for appropriate stories. Many of these were about birds and animals, some were about farms, and some about children's activities. As each story was located, a marker was placed in the book. Groups were then set up according to the children's interests, and the teacher helped to make sure that simpler stories were in the hands of the less skillful readers. In each group the children skimmed the stories available to them, and then listed the types of information that could be shared with other groups. The job of deciding on exact details called for considerable rereading of the stories. During these work sessions the teacher went from group to group, helping individual children and discussing plans for the final reports. In the final sharing period each child in the group told briefly about his special reading, using pictures he had drawn to aid in his presentation. The activities of the science unit that was running parallel to the reading project helped the children to interpret their reading, and gave them some additional material to use for illustrative purposes.

Stories may also serve for informational-reading purposes, and other reading activities may be curtailed in order to allow full time for the development of informational-reading skills. More detailed examples of such units are included in Chapter VIII. Unit activities should become more varied and challenging as children develop

greater reading skill. Examples of more elaborate projects carried out by intermediate-grade children are described in Chapter XI. Many of these are adaptable for primary groups.

Find opportunities during reading units to work on specific reading skills. How does the teacher give help to individuals and to groups when children are engaged in the more extensive and independent activities connected with reading units? Some of the guidance is given in a group setting. Some is provided individually as each child carries out his part of the project.

New vocabulary is somewhat more difficult to foresee when children are reading many different stories. However, the youngsters who engage in extensive unit activities are the ones who have developed relatively strong independent reading skills and who should be able to make reasonably adept use of context, picture, and word-analysis clues. Sometimes special terms can be introduced as plans for the unit are laid. Then, at least part of the independent reading can be done during a period when the teacher is free to help individuals. The possibility of teaching children to help each other with difficult words has also been mentioned. The technique of selecting, for extensive independent reading, materials somewhat simpler than those that would be used for group study of a single story is an additional help in assuring that vocabulary problems will not be too heavy.

Help in developing greater reading skill can be given to the group as a whole at several points. Preliminary plans should include consideration of how to read. Will everyone read every story? What should each reader be prepared to report? Are there more materials to be located; if so, what is the most efficient way of finding them? How much time should we take to read independently? If two people work together, how can they best help each other? Times when the group comes together to report on progress offer other opportunities to help. Billy's notes aren't too clear; what is missing? It's hard to tell exactly what the story was about; how could people report more clearly? If we want to choose just one story to share with other groups, what standards should we use to decide? Plans for a culminating activity offer still other opportunities to focus on skills. Techniques of oral reading, of dramatization, of report writing are among those on which children may need to work.

In addition to the help given to the group as a whole, a teacher usually can find time to work with individual children. As she cir-

culates around the room, she may stop for a minute to help a child analyze a hard word, discuss a story with another child to be sure he has understood it, take a little time to look at the simple notes being made by a third, see that another youngster is floundering with a book that is too hard for him and help him to locate something easier, act as a critic for an oral-reading presentation. Time to work directly with the problems of individuals is increased in proportion to the amount of independent work the children can be helped to undertake.

PROVIDING WORK-TYPE ACTIVITIES TO MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

An effective skills program is an individualized program. As suggested in Chapter VI, the time soon comes when children, even those who started to read in the same group and worked with the same materials, develop different reading needs. Their progress will be dependent, in part, on the skill with which these needs are met.

A number of ways of meeting individual needs through grouping and scheduling and through wise choice of materials have already been discussed. Work-type activities, which children can carry out independently, are another aid to an individualized program. These exercises can be prepared by the teacher and hectographed or mimeographed, or they can be selected from the many workbooks prepared for use with primary classes.

Even with beginners, there will be wide differences in needs for special work-type experiences. Some will master each new reading task with ease and secure all the extra practice that seems necessary through the various follow-up activities undertaken by their groups. Others will benefit from rather regular experiences with the simplified, but interesting, tasks posed by work-type exercises. At no reader level does a workbook serve its purpose as an aid to an individualized program if every child is taken through every activity in the book. Such routine use is certain to doom some children who would otherwise be reading independently or be engaged creatively in another classroom project to reading activities that do not meet their needs. It is equally likely that routine experiences with a workbook will fail to meet the needs of other children, who would benefit from extra practice were this practice focussed on their individual problems. Used selectively, the materials in workbooks at the primary level, as at other reading levels, can save the classroom teacher valuable time in providing the individualized practice required by her class.

Teachers who use work-type activities selectively will find it advantageous to purchase workbooks, like basal readers, in small sets of ten to a dozen copies. Usually it is helpful to have available the workbooks designed to accompany the basal readers that are given the most constant use. However, workbooks from other series are often equally valuable. There is a place, also, for materials not related to any particular series. Among the total selection may well be some copies of workbooks that bear directly on a specific problem, such as the development of word-study skills. When such a variety of teaching aids is available, teachers must guard, particularly, against the temptation to use more of these activities than children actually need.

As suggested in Chapter VI, work-type activities can be used in a variety of group settings. Some may serve to give additional experience to the members of a regular reading group. Some may be provided for individual children who have been ill, who have transferred from another school system, who are having temporary difficulty with a special skill, or who for some other reason seem likely to benefit from experiences that supplement their other reading activities. Some may serve for special practice groups. Mention was also made in Chapter VI of problems demanding work-type experiences that might arise in special groups working on informational-reading activities—inability to locate answers to specific questions, lack of skill in using the table of contents to locate needed information. A further step is taken toward individualizing the reading program when work-type experiences are used with varied groupings such as these.

Provide activities that challenge increased reading skill. Certain general criteria can be suggested as guides in the selection or preparation of work-type activities. First, the activity should focus on a specific skill needed by the children. Busy work, or seat work, that serves mainly to keep children busy and in their own seats is not helpful. Second, there should be maximum emphasis on thoughtful reading, whether the activity calls for understanding a paragraph, for reading a single sentence, or for matching a word with its correct picture. Third, the activity itself should have high interest value. Paragraphs used for reading background should be worth reading. Questions should be thought-provoking. Ways of indicating correct answers should be sufficiently varied to make the activity fun. Fourth, the amount of time actually spent in reading should be high in pro-

portion to the amount of time spent in coloring, pasting, cutting, drawing, keeping score in a game, or other such non-reading activities that often accompany work-type exercises. Fifth, directions should be simple enough that work can proceed independently, once the teacher has given general instructions. And, finally, work-type activities planned as follow-up experiences should not be allowed to exhaust the interest value of basal-reader stories.

Teachers can achieve greater interest in work-type activities and, at the same time, save themselves both time and effort, if they plan materials that can be re-used in several ways. The exercises may then serve for a series of group experiences, or may even be re-used with another group. For example, a single sheet may be hectographed with an illustration at the top of the page. Below may be a paragraph, followed by a series of questions. Under that may be five or six directions concerning the picture. At the bottom of the page may be boxes containing the key words that answer the questions. One activity might be to write the correct answers to the questions; another to follow the directions for completing or coloring the picture; a third, to add to the picture all the appropriate objects mentioned in the paragraph; and a fourth, to cut out the words at the bottom of the page and to paste them next to the appropriate parts of the picture. Children need not complete all these activities, nor need they use one sheet for the activities they do. Fresh sheets can be passed out with new directions. Children themselves can help to prepare interesting and versatile materials. A series of riddles developed by various class members around key vocabulary in a unit of work could be mimeographed and used in several ways. One would be to read the riddle and to write the correct answer; a second, to draw as clear as possible a picture of the object in the riddle; a third, to match the riddles with appropriate word cards.

Word games, and other work-type materials that can be used repeatedly by many children, may be mounted on cardboard. In some classrooms a variety of these materials are placed on a table of reading games, to be used during independent work periods. Such activities might include simple word games; card-holders and sets of word cards with which children can write stories of their own or reproduce experience charts; "surprise books" directing children to draw special pictures or to carry out simple directions for construction; one-word picture books; sets of flash cards that the children may read to each other; sets of phonograms and letters for word-

building activities Generally speaking, one test of a good teacher made activity is the amount of effective practice provided for the children in proportion to the expenditure of the teacher s time Many teachers build files containing samples of easy, interesting exercises classified according to various reading skills, so that they have at hand models from which new activities can be planned

Plan activities for a variety of reading skills. In the beginning, many work type activities may be designed to give experience with new words, since the problem of becoming thoroughly familiar with new vocabulary is basic to successful reading More skilled readers may also need a certain amount of work with new words and may benefit particularly from activities to develop word analysis techniques There also need to be provisions for experiences in following the general gist of a passage in noting details carefully, in following directions, in sensing a sequence

Not all reading skills can be practiced effectively in a work type setting Learning to evaluate and to think critically about what is read, for example, is developed more successfully through actual experiences with stories or informational materials, although more skilled readers may be given a limited number of exercises requiring them to distinguish factual from fictional statements or to tell whether a paragraph actually contains needed information Ability to identify effective choice of words or skillful development of plot is also better developed when an actual story is under consideration Work type activities are of more use in situations in which a definite answer rather than a judgment or an opinion is needed

Intensive practice of a work type nature is more valuable after a child has developed some command of a new skill Primary children are in the first stages of developing readiness for such reference techniques as using guide words, using alphabetical order deciding on key words for work with an index using section and paragraph headings and chapter summaries They are also taking their first steps toward developing effective reading rate and may be still hampered at many points by their word study skills Intensive work type experiences to build reference techniques or to develop effective reading rate, then, belong in the intermediate grades

The suggestions that follow outline possible work type activities for developing better skill in getting the general gist of a paragraph in following the sequence of a paragraph or story, in noting details and in following directions These activities should be supplemented

by the suggestions for special practice to develop word-study skills included in Chapter IX. For children who are approaching typical intermediate-grade reading ability, the activities suggested in Chapter XII may also be helpful. These include work-type experiences appropriate for increasing comprehension skills, for developing effective reading rate, for building oral-reading skills, for helping with the word-study problems of older children and for teaching reference techniques. No particular effort has been made to designate the suggestions that follow for particular grade levels. Teachers will need to adjust the vocabulary and the complexity of the activity to the abilities of their particular groups. As with the suggested activities in other parts of this volume, this list is meant to be illustrative, not to be a prescription of activities for any given group.

Summarizing the general contents of a passage is called for in: Choosing the correct answer to tell how a character felt, reading a short paragraph and checking the best title, or the best statement of what the paragraph is about; matching a series of pictures to the correct paragraphs, drawing a picture or series of pictures to illustrate a paragraph; finding the answer to a riddle; checking the picture that best illustrates a paragraph, finding the key sentence in a paragraph; arranging a series of mimeographed paragraphs in the proper order to reconstruct a story.

Identifying the sequence of events in a passage is needed for Placing in order a series of statements from a paragraph, story, or experience record; drawing a series of pictures that tell the events of a story or paragraph in order; reading a short story and listing the scenes that would be needed for a play; reading a short paragraph and checking the right statement to indicate what would happen next, crossing out a sentence that does not belong in a paragraph; writing the names of the characters in the order in which they appeared in a story, writing a new ending for a story.

Ability to note details is needed in: Choosing the right answer to questions such as *who, what color, how many, when, where,* after reading a short paragraph, circling *yes* or *no* after sentences giving details from a passage; answering riddles crossing out a word that makes a sentence incorrect; drawing a picture to illustrate a particular event in a passage, matching pictures to sentences, words, or phrases; drawing a picture to illustrate the answer to a riddle; matching key words with appropriate phrases, key characters with descriptions; writing riddles for others in the class to guess.

Skill in following directions is important for: Setting up and playing a game according to written directions; following written directions for coloring or constructing, reading a series of sentences and following the directions given in each; drawing missing parts in a picture, coloring it, or marking it according to written directions; indicating the correct an-

swer to a question by drawing a picture; helping to develop a picture dictionary according to agreed-upon plans; sorting sentences or words under appropriate headings—things that fly, things that go on wheels.

Help children become aware of the skills they need. The best work-type activity loses much of its value if it is merely handed in for correction. Children grow through identifying and correcting their mistakes. If a half hour is to be allotted to a work-type exercise, it is often more effective to have the children work for fifteen minutes and to discuss correct answers and analyze errors for fifteen minutes than it is to have them work for the full period and leave no time for discussion. A work-type activity need not always be discussed the day it is assigned. Children may work for one period and come to a group session to go over their work the next. It is also possible to find ways of giving help to individual children. If the work-type activities are planned for an independent work period the teacher may be able to move around the room, giving a little help to each child who seems to be in difficulty. Sometimes it is possible to allow time for children to bring their work individually to the teacher's desk and to check it with her. Whatever the method used to give the help, the discussion should develop insight into reading skills. "You didn't look carefully at part of that word. Look again." "Read the sentence again, what word did you miss?" "Today you didn't have a bit of trouble with *was* and *saw*, did you?"

Children can also grow in their insight into their own strengths and weaknesses as they discuss the need for work-type activities. "Mamie, you were absent for our trip, and we learned some new words about airplanes. Suppose you work with this group who are practicing them." "Aileen, I think we could help you with your spelling if you did some special work with Pete's group." "Yesterday we had trouble guessing what would happen next in the story. Here are some questions. . . ." "We weren't very good today in telling exactly what happened. Here is some work to help in reading more carefully."

When the reading program is planned effectively, children enjoy reading for its own sake—the interesting stories, the fun of follow-up activities, the excitement of exploring new books on their own, the challenge of locating information. They also find genuine pleasure in discovering how to read, in participating in practice activities designed to develop better skill, and in taking joint responsibility for their own growth.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING THE WORK OF READING GROUPS IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

Are children provided with materials varied sufficiently in content, style, and level of difficulty to facilitate the development of reading skills?

Is the classroom equipped with materials appropriate for children of several levels of ability?

Are children encouraged to approach their reading of new materials in a thoughtful, purposeful fashion?

Are the activities of reading groups varied so as to make possible the development of many types of reading skills?

Are children encouraged to undertake as challenging independent reading activities as they are capable of handling?

Are children growing in their insight into what it means to be a skillful reader?

Are follow-up activities related to a story interesting and purposeful?

Are specific skills, such as oral reading, developed in ways that do not militate against the development of equally important skills, such as reading silently for information?

Are ample work-type activities provided to meet the needs for special practice of individuals and of groups?

Are work-type activities used selectively in terms of special problems?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Betts, Emmett A. *Foundations of Reading Instruction,* chapter 22. New York: American Book Company, 1946. Pp. xii + 757.

Dolch, Edward W. *Teaching Primary Reading,* chapters 13, 15. Second Edition. Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1950. Pp. vii + 458.

Horn, Ernest and Curtis, James F. "Improvement of Oral Reading," *Reading in the Elementary School,* pp. 254–265. Forty-eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 2. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949. Pp. xi + 343.

McKee, Paul. *The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School,* chapters 9, 10. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948. Pp. xi + 622.

New Primary Manual, chapters 12–15. Curriculum Bulletin 300. Cincinnati: Cincinnati Public Schools, 1953. Pp. 496.

See also the references suggested under *Providing Reading Materials,* at the end of Chapter XI, and the references at the end of Chapter VI. Help in developing special practice activities for skilled readers in the primary grades will be found in the references at the end of Chapter XII.

CHAPTER VIII

DEVELOPING READING SKILLS THROUGH ON-GOING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

GLIMPSES INTO TYPICAL CLASSROOMS[1]

A first grade uses reading to serve many purposes. In a first-grade classroom in the spring one bulletin board contains a helpers' chart. Above it is the two line notice, *There are many things to do. We take turns doing them.* On an easel in the front of the room is a flash-card holder, in which have been placed sentence cards telling the day's news. In the center of this holder is a calendar. Below are cards giving special news and a weather report. To the right of this are cards indicating birthdays and to the left are cards indicating special events for the month.

On a second bulletin board are children's original stories, written in their own handwriting. Above them is the two-line caption, *Look at your stories. Can you read them?* On the board at the back of the room, surrounded by a colorful border, are samples of children's work, with the two line caption, *Look, Look, Look. See the Good Work.* A color chart is posted nearby.

Evidence of unit activities can be found on several bulletin boards. On one is a news bulletin about a recent trip to the Zoo. Nearby are pictures of animals. On a second board, under the notice, *Words to Help You*, are silhouettes of zoo animals, each with the appropriate name printed in manuscript writing. Other pictures about the Zoo are fitted into bulletin boards where there is space. Some of the children's

[1] The author is indebted to the primary teachers in the Louis M. Schiel and the North Avondale Schools, Cincinnati, for many of the ideas in this chapter. Particular credit should go to Miss Beulah Rhodes whose first grade classroom is described, to Mrs. Louise Rairden whose second-grade classroom is described and whose second-grade charts are quoted frequently, to Miss Jenny Sciarra whose third grade classroom is described, to Miss Violette Maxey whose unit on construction and housing is described, to Mrs. Helen Glimpse whose first grade unit on birds is discussed, to Mrs. Marvimil Nankovitch, whose children's charts about trains are quoted, and to Miss Rosemary McNeese for her third graders' chart on manners.

creative stories are about animals. The class has also been studying about farms. On one board are pictures of baby animals. In a corner of another is a sign saying, *This Is How Farm Animals Talk.* Under it are pictures of the animals and their characteristic sounds.

Special interest centers have their notices. Over the play corner is the message, *Patsy is our baby doll. Come and play with Patsy. You can have fun here.* In the library corner, with its shelves of easy books, is a notice about caring for books. Over the easel is the sign, *Come and Paint.* At the back of the room is a number chart entitled, *We Count by Ones.* Nearby are some number cards with concrete groupings of numbers. On the table below this bulletin board are some arithmetic games with simple printed directions and a word game entitled, *Come and Fish.* Nearby is evidence of science interests in a report of the children's experiences in taking pinwheels out in the wind on the playground.

Books are in evidence also. The library table and the nearby bookshelves have a collection of easy books, some supplementary readers, a picture dictionary, and some preprimers and primers. Animal and circus stories are prominent. In a magazine rack are some children's magazines and some copies of a children's weekly newspaper. Stored in a bookcase are sets of basal readers, some copies of the first book of a basal science series, and some of the first reader of a basal health series. Without seeming cluttered, this classroom is filled with opportunities to read.

A second grade shows increased reading skill. A second-grade classroom is equally rich in its opportunities to read, but gives evidence that children can handle more difficult problems. Again there is a helpers' chart. On the same bulletin board are posted an invitation from another class and two postcards from children who had been with the group earlier in the year. A news bulletin written in the children's handwriting hangs from an easel. Tucked into available space around the room are other items to read—a spring poem, a list of articles needed for a Red Cross box, a health chart.

In this class a unit on foods is ending and one on travel is being begun. From a stand hangs the full collection of the experience records written during the study of foods. On a bulletin board are evidences of the first steps being taken in the travel unit. Under a caption, *What shall we try to find out about travelling?* is posted a list of questions about ships, written in a child's handwriting. Over a little, is the sign, *Travel Reading Parties,* and under it a list signed by children who are ready to read a travel story to a small group. Posted on the same bulletin board, in children's handwriting, are some original stories about boats. Farther over is a partial list of ship's officers. Wherever there is room on this bulletin board are pictures and newspaper clippings about ships, brought in by the children. This class has also been to the Zoo, but whereas the first-grade bulletin board merely listed the names of animals under their pictures, the second-graders have classified their pictures according to, *The Gnawing Family, The Monkey Family,* and *The Reptile Family.*

Special interest centers give evidence that children are reading more

widely Over a window box garden is the beginning of a science record labelled, *Watch to see what will happen* On a bulletin board back of the library corner is a two line caption, *We like to read at home Here are some books we have read at home* Under this caption are colored envelopes, each with a child s name In the envelopes are cards in the children s handwriting containing names of books they have read On a corner bulletin board, as an aid to independent writing are sets of cards containing alphabetized lists of words frequently needed for written work Number charts and number games are also in evidence

The variety of books to read is wider than it was in the first grade The library table contains special collections of books about animals and about travel Supplementary readers and some basal texts have markers indicating special sections for the children to read Large books and some magazines are in a corner rack Sets of basal readers and of basal books in subject matter areas are stored in bookcases around the room Reading serves many functional purposes in this room

A third grade capitalizes on growing independence In a third grade the uses of reading testify to children s growing skill Classroom records still aid the day s work to run smoothly At the back of the room is the helpers chart On a side bulletin board are a calendar and the notice *April Birthdays* Posted on the door is a safety poster from the Automobile Club Near the window is a health poster On two attractive small bulletin boards built on the backs of cupboard doors are spring pictures one set accompanied by a short story about spring and the second by a spring poem On another small bulletin board toward the back of the room is the caption *Our Sharing Corner* Below is a weather map two thank you letters from children who have been ill a letter from a Korean child with an explanation in English and several issues of a children s weekly newspaper tacked together by one corner

This class has embarked on an intensive study of the wind The children have made drawings of objects the wind can move cut them out and posted them to make an attractive border on narrow bulletin boards above the chalkboards One is captioned *Wind is Moving Air* and the second *More Fun with Wind* On a bulletin board at the back of the room is a chart labelled *Our Plans* This contains the children s suggestions of how they can learn more about the wind To one side of this is a set of directions for building a kite On the sharing corner bulletin board are the announcement of a county kite flying contest and nearby is a safety poster on flying kites Farther over is a chart labelled *Let s Find Out* raising questions for some later experiments about air and next to it is a chart classifying the types of things wind does Between the windows is another small chart about air, and below it stand some science books

Near the interest centers in this room are more books than were in evidence in the two preceding grades Beside a table of number activities are several books about numbers Around the room in various places are books about wind, air, and related topics The library corner has a wide

collection of children's books. On its table there are also sets of flash cards which help to review new vocabulary. Taped on the blackboard near the spot where the reading groups meet are cards naming the vowels and the consonants.

The bookcases in this room contain a still greater variety of basal readers; supplementary texts; health, arithmetic, science, and spelling series; and social-studies books. A picture dictionary and a regular dictionary both show signs of regular use. A classroom encyclopedia has been added to the available reference texts. Children in this room are reading widely, both for information and for recreation.

A typical primary classroom invites children to read. These day-by-day reading experiences are the more valuable because they center around problems important to the children. Many times a day it is necessary to read thoughtfully if an activity is to move forward smoothly. These experiences complement and reinforce in many ways the reading that goes on in reading groups.

How do teachers make the most of the opportunities for reading afforded by the varied activities of the typical primary classroom? This chapter is concerned with the problems related to two types of reading experiences. First, how can most effective use be made of informational-reading experiences? And, second, how can the foundations for interest in recreational reading be laid?

DEVELOPING READING SKILLS THROUGH INFORMATIONAL-READING EXPERIENCES

Children's experiences in reading for information in a typical primary classroom range from pauses for a few seconds to note one's housekeeping responsibilities or to see who has a birthday this week, to the extended reading that often accompanies the development of unit activities that help children become better acquainted with the world in which they live.

A general picture of the activities of the primary classroom which provide the setting for children's reading experiences was given in Chapter IV, when readiness activities were described, and in Chapter VI, when the problems of planning the total reading experiences for more skilled readers in the primary grades were discussed. The activities described in this chapter assume the rich and varied total program, the experiences that build broad experience background, the planning with children, and the flexible scheduling and grouping described in these earlier chapters.

This section is focussed on three separate, but interrelated, prob-

lems. First, how can the most effective use be made of day-by-day opportunities to read signs and notices? Second, how can the reading experiences related to unit activities be developed? Third, how can both these types of reading experiences contribute to primary children's readiness for the more extensive reading activities in the content fields that they will undertake as intermediate-graders?

Using Classroom Records as Aids to Daily Work

Use records that help in the problems of living together. Among the most prominent stimulations to read in the classrooms that have been described are the many signs and notices on the bulletin boards. Not every classroom experience requires a set of records, but they can be used in many ways as aids to more effective group living. In the early part of the first grade, these records are likely to serve as prereading materials. Gradually the children take over more of the responsibility for their own reading.

Helpers' charts are among the earliest and the most constantly used of the records of plans for cooperative group living. There may also be special sets of directions for such group responsibilities as caring for a pet, signing a book out of the classroom library, or carrying out the special jobs of the clean-up committee. These directions the children compose together and then recheck as they undertake the special responsibility.

Primary teachers devise various ways of making such records interesting and functional. Pictures drawn by the children frequently help to guide the reading. Charts listing room responsibilities are usually designed so that new names may be inserted. The children in one hospitable class planned a chart to hang outside their door telling visitors where they were—We are at home. Please come in; We are at the library; We are on the playground. To the left of this list ran a ribbon, a bow on which could be set at the appropriate message.

Cooperatively-derived rules foster happy group living in the classroom. The following standards for work periods and for sharing periods were arrived at by a first grade and a second grade, respectively.[2] These records, and a majority of the others in this chapter are written in single-sentence paragraphs, with the second lines of two-line sentences slightly indented so that the child's eyes will be able to catch easily the beginnings of each new sentence.

[2] James R. Bryner, "The Content of Primary School Experience Charts," pp. 70, 66. Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation. Stanford Stanford University, 1951.

WORK TIME STANDARDS

1. We work quietly.
2. We talk softly.
3. We play quietly.
4. When we hear the bell we stop our work.
5. We put out tools away quickly.
6. We get ready to talk about our work.

Something to tell—

1. It must be something that everyone wants to hear.
2. The child must tell it well.

Something to show—

1. It must be something that everyone would like to see.
2. The child must know something interesting to say about it.

The discussion in a second grade resulted in suggestions for behavior for a first trip by bus that helped to make the trip a pleasant one.[3] In a third grade the children summarized their thinking about good manners.

RULES FOR OUR TRIP

1. We get on the bus one at a time.
2. The first ones go to the back.
3. We will walk quietly.
4. We get off one at a time.
5. We will not touch things.
6. We will stay together.
7. We will have good manners.
8. We will be good listeners.
9. We will all be happy.

MANNERS

Do not interrupt people when they are talking.
Learn to share with others.
When you ask for things, say, "Please."
When walking in front of someone say, "Excuse me."
Do not make fun of anyone.
Say, "Please" if you don't hear what is said.
Always hand things to others.
Do what you are told.

Other records may serve to outline children's responsibilities as cooperative members of the school community. In one first grade suggestions for fire drills were composed. Safety problems in city traffic were summarized by another.[4]

FIRE DRILL

We walk fast.
We do not run.
Wait for the leaders.
Do not play around.
We are quiet.

SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Look both ways.
Cross at the corner.
Obey the policeman.
Obey the safety patrol.
Red means stop.
Green means go.

[3] James R. Bryner, *op cit.*, pp. 74, 45.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 73.

The members of a second grade summarized some of their safety responsibilities on the playground as follows: [5]

1. Be careful how you get off and on the teeter.
2. Don't do tricks on the merry-go-round.
3. Do not run into the streets after a ball.
4. Watch the traffic lights.
5. Keep away from between parked cars.

Cooperative relations with other school helpers were recorded after the children in another first grade toured the school. These charts served as prereading materials in the early fall.[6] These two records illustrate paragraphing in regular basal-reader style.

Mr. Hansen is our janitor. He cleans the floors. He brings in milk bottles.

This morning he cleaned the windows.

We can help him by keeping the papers picked up.

Mrs. Green is Dr. Moore's secretary. She types the notes we take home.

Mrs. Green counts the milk money.

She rings the fire bell.

A second grade prepared the following guide for good customers in the school supply store:

HOW CAN WE BE GOOD CUSTOMERS

Be Safe
Look where you are going.
Keep away from glass.
Stand quietly.
Keep your hands to yourself.

Be Polite
Wait for your turn.
Talk with a soft voice.
Say, "Please," "Thank you," and "You are welcome."
Touch only what you are going to buy.

Be Honest
Pay for what you get.
Give the right money.
Give back money if you get too much change.

Be Sensible
Look around for what you want.
Ask for things you don't see.
Read the price yourself.
Make a good choice.
Think before you buy.

[5] James R. Bryner, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44.

At another time the children in this class composed safety rules after they had talked through the problems of carrying umbrellas on the crowded school grounds.

RAINY DAY SAFETY

1. Look around before you
 open your umbrella.
2. Hold your umbrella high.
3. Walk slow.
4. Watch out for traffic.
5. Look around before you
 close your umbrella.

Records such as those that have been cited are written as the problem arises. Many of their values for the children come as the problem in group living is talked out. As reading-matter, they remain posted in the classroom as long as they are needed. Their vocabulary load is relatively heavy, but they are phrased in words the children themselves have used. When they are reread, the teacher is there to help with unfamiliar words.

Find ways of posting items of current interest. A primary classroom is a busy place. Birthdays have to be remembered, letters or cards sent to children who are ill, letters from travellers acknowledged, notice taken of holidays, and events of interest in children's homes given recognition.

In the classrooms described at the beginning of this chapter, part of the bulletin-board space is given to these current interests. Sometimes a sharing bulletin board or a sharing table is used to display letters and clippings, or to set up a labelled exhibit of articles brought from home. Some teachers set aside a section of a bulletin board for special events—notices to be taken home, auditorium sessions to which the children are invited, paper drives. Such special bulletin boards are sometimes framed with a bright paper border so that they stand out as centers to watch.

A class news bulletin may be of help as a record of events of the day. Sometimes the writing of the day's news is used as a language activity. One such record, composed by a first grade, read as follows:

Today is Monday, May 4.
It looks like rain.
It is fun to play outdoors.
We can play outdoors today.
Tomorrow will be Tuesday.

After some second-graders, who were gaining skill in written expression, had had some group experiences in composing a class diary, they took turns writing the entries. When help was needed with spelling, the teacher supplied it. The following are typical of the excerpts appearing in children's handwriting on the long sheets of paper that made up the diary.[7]

Wednesday, January 17, 19— by Jimmy
Ruth is a Blue Bird.
She wore her Blue Bird suit to school.
Betty is a Brownie.
She wore her Brownie suit to school, too.

Monday, January 22, 19— by Marie
The Museum of Natural History sent us a cowboy exhibit.
They sent a rattle snake, two prairie dogs, two pair of cattle horns, and an old time saddle.

Thursday, January 25, 19— by Kenneth
This was a snowy day.
So we made spatter paint snowmen.

In the early fall, news bulletins can help children to get acquainted with each other and with their school. As a prereading activity, one teacher helped the children list the names of the principal, the school secretary, the custodian, and the school nurse. Another first-grade class used this information chart:

We come to school.
We come to Schiel School.
We are in First Grade.
We are in Room 101.
Our teacher is Miss Rhodes

Second graders drew pictures of their homes and added brief descriptive captions as a get-acquainted activity shortly after the opening of school. In another second grade the children brought snapshots of themselves and their families. These were given captions and posted on a get-acquainted bulletin board. Third-graders wrote brief autobiographies of themselves to make up a special bulletin board.

Notices such as those that have been described are usually read

[7] *New Primary Manual*, p. 88. Curriculum Bulletin 300. Cincinnati Cincinnati Public Schools, 1953. Copyright 1953 Board of Education Cincinnati, Ohio

during a sharing period or a class planning session. Brief news bulletins for the day may be composed during these same planning sessions. Longer autobiographies or class diaries are often written during periods set aside for more extensive experiences in creative expression. Once the materials are put on bulletin boards, children are encouraged to refer to them again as they need them, or to reread them for pleasure when they have a few minutes to spare.

Make it important to read classroom records and notices. Some classrooms which, on first glance, seem to be teeming with opportunities to read, actually provide very little reading experience. Most teachers watch for occasions to refer to special notices. A group disagrees about the day on which Jamie brought his dog to school and someone looks back at the class diary to make sure. Betty glances hastily at the helpers' chart and does Billy's job. Here is a chance to spend a few seconds on the importance of reading carefully. Four children congregate at an easel where two should have been, and spill a jar of paint. It is a good time to look at the rules again. As the children discuss a recent program, they check their list to see how good an audience they have been. Records become functional when they are used in ways like these.

When children have become familiar with a set of directions or a series of rules, the record need no longer occupy a prominent spot in the room. If there is a possibility that it will be needed again, it may be bound with others to form a class book, perhaps entitled *How We Work Together*. Children enjoy rereading such materials, and the accumulated series can provide a helpful picture of how the group has grown over the year. The materials posted in a primary classroom in which reading is functional change frequently. The reading experiences afforded to the children are not measured by the quantity of the reading-matter with which they are surrounded, nor by the beauty of the bulletin-board arrangements. The ultimate test is the use to which the materials are put.

Developing Reading Activities Related to Units of Work

Help children to explore as widely as their skill will permit. The unit activities that help children become acquainted with the world around them play an increasingly important part in their total reading program as they progress through the grades. Types of problems about which such units may develop were mentioned briefly in Chapters IV and VI. Beginners start their study of their world with

questions about familiar aspects of the environment near at hand With increasing maturity children venture farther afield in space and in time.

Throughout the elementary school, and even into secondary school and college, reading is only one of many methods through which learners secure information about their world The younger the child, the more important it is that he have firsthand experience All the resources suggested in Chapter IV for enriching the environment of beginners need to be tapped throughout the primary grades

Ways of summarizing information and of testing concepts are also varied Not always is the summary in written form. Discussion helps to consolidate information Often this discussion results in a series of experience records composed by children and teacher More mature children may plan for oral reports or for simple panels Pictures are used in many ways—children may paint pictures to illustrate information of particular interest, they may plan a mural they may piece together a set of pictures to develop a class motion picture they may illustrate their own stories they may develop a picture dictionary of new and interesting terms, they may make slides for an opaque projector or plan special posters

Many kinds of construction activities can be used to summarize what children have learned small scale models a classroom store or post office dolls dressed to represent the people being studied models of specific objects of interest peep shows, simple maps Dramatization may range from dramatic play in the play corner to a special program planned to share the unit with other groups or with parents

Written summaries of information are used from the beginning At first these are records composed jointly by teacher and children Sometimes these records, together with children's pictures, are bound into large class books Later individuals or small groups may develop other types of summaries in booklet form—individual booklets, class newspapers, class magazines, travel folders handbooks scrapbooks which contain a combination of children's work and pictures they have clipped from magazines Information may also be summarized in riddles, bulletin boards may be devoted to creative stories, accurate records of science experiments be kept.

As suggested in Chapter VI, the patterns of grouping that emerge during a unit are complex. Some aspects will involve the whole class,

some groups, and some individuals. The same child may work in two groups, one to locate information and the other to work out part of an all-class project. Sometimes children with common interests will work together and reading materials will be adjusted accordingly; sometimes reading groups will take on informational-reading activities.

The amount of reading done and the type of material read will vary with the nature of the unit, the ability of the group, and the materials available. With increased reading skill should come the use of a greater variety of material, and more independence in the way it is attacked.

Make the most of varied opportunities to read as units develop. How do units actually work out? What kinds of reading experiences do they offer? How are these experiences related to other types of activities? The following units from first-, second-, and third-grade classrooms are examples of the ways plans can develop. Five units are reported in all. The first is typical of the work of a first grade in the early fall when reading skills are limited. The second, third, and fourth are typical of average groups in late first, second, and third grades. The fifth represents the work of a group of superior ability in the third grade.

First graders in the early fall studied the helpers who came to their homes. This unit grew out of an earlier one in which the children had become acquainted with the people in the school who helped them.

In the discussion with which the unit began, the children made a list of people who came to their homes. Since the school was in a residential area, it was possible to watch from the classroom window to see what tradesmen stopped at nearby houses. The children also made plans to ask their parents what other people came to their homes. In subsequent discussions, they decided that the postman who came to the school and the traffic patrolman should be included on the list. How do these people help us and what can we do to help them, were the underlying themes.

As lists of workers were developed, plans were laid to find out more about their work. Some of them were invited to the school. The traffic patrolman took time to come in, and to allow the children to look into his cruiser. One father who was a postman and another who was a doctor found a few minutes for the children in their schedules. So did a mother who was a public health nurse. Before each of the visitors the children planned with care the questions they intended to ask. Other information was secured by asking parents, and by talking to workers who came to the homes over the weekends. Some information the

teacher supplied by reading stories to the children and by showing movies.

The children found many ways of summarizing what they had learned. There were a number of language experiences. As they talked about each new worker they composed a group record which they later illustrated. These, together with some of the children's paintings, were bound into a large book. Dramatic play in the playhouse during the time that this unit was developing often involved a special visitor. As the children talked about how they could be helpful, they dramatized short scenes to illustrate opening the door for the doctor, what to do when the paperboy comes for his money, taking a package from the delivery man. In addition to these group activities there were a number of stories dictated to the teacher.

Concrete ways of summarizing what had been learned were also used. The class developed a mural depicting the visitors to homes that had been observed from the classroom window. The background of houses and street for this mural was drawn by a group who used the view from the window as a guide. On this background were pasted pictures of delivery trucks and workers drawn and cut out by individual children. Everyone in the class brought something from home that was typical of one or more of the workers being studied. This exhibit ranged from laundry lists and milk bottles to an empty pillbox with a doctor's prescription. The children also painted many individual pictures and brought in a number clipped from magazines for the bulletin board.

Group activities were not highly organized for this unit. Many of the discussion periods involved the class as a whole. Small groups worked on various parts of the mural, but individuals also contributed. The groups that engaged in the dramatic play were selected for that particular activity, but did not work together on other things. The children in reading groups took time to dictate stories to the teacher, and later to listen to them as she read them back. Everyone helped to bring in articles for the exhibit table, and to collect needed information from home. At a time when children were taking their first steps toward cooperative group living, they were given the feeling of what it means to be helpful group members without the responsibility for projects that demanded a high level of group organization.

During most of this unit the regular activities of the reading groups moved ahead with preprimers and primers as their focus. What few simple stories on community helpers could be located were read by the appropriate reading group. One group worked mainly with readiness materials.

Much of the reading done for the unit was centered around the various classroom records composed by the children. These supplied a second reading activity for the day. Some were composed by the entire class—summaries of what the visitors had told; lists of workers; records of plans. Some were written by smaller groups—the children who drew the background for the mural recorded how they did it; several who watched

specially to see what trucks pulled up across the street recorded what they had seen. Some reading materials were worked out individually with the teacher—children planned captions for their own pictures; suggested labels for the articles they brought for the exhibit; and dictated stories of workmen who came to their homes. Some of the most skilled readers were able to do a little independent reading of library books, and the stories read by the teacher supplied more information.

Work with the experience records was of a typical prereading and beginning-reading nature. During the discussion periods in which the group records were composed, time was taken to read selected lines, to match word and phrase cards, and to carry out similar review activities. Smaller groups that composed records worked with them in much the same fashion until they knew them thoroughly, and then read them to the rest of the class. Help with this was given while other children were painting, working on the mural, or engaged in individual projects.

The stories dictated by children about workers who came to their homes were edited and simplified. Then they were hectographed and stapled into little one or two-page booklets with covers that gave the author's name. These were read in reading groups and later illustrated and placed on the library table.

A few work-type activities were also used to review important vocabulary. Children matched workers and signs on the exhibits with pictures. They drew pictures to match selected words. They drew illustrations to go with key sentences from the experience records. They rearranged phrase cards to rebuild experience records and used word and phrase cards to write stories of their own. Even though this class had limited skill, reading played an important part in the unit.

With increased reading skill come more opportunities to work with books. In the spring a first-grade class developed both social- and natural-science concepts in studying about farms. The children in this group lived in a small town and many were used to driving with their parents into the surrounding farming land. Many of the homes had gardens, and a few families kept chickens. Nevertheless, there were interesting aspects of the farmer's work about which the children knew very little.

The unit started during a sharing period when a child who had visited a farm over the weekend came in bubbling over with information about the new lambs and baby pigs. Out of the discussion came the proposal that the group try to visit a large farm at the edge of town.

In preparation for their visit, the children talked more about trips to farms that they had taken with their families. They also discussed what their fathers were doing in preparation for planting their gardens, and speculated as to whether farmers went about it in the same way. They made a list of the farm animals they particularly hoped to see, aided by

the teacher who had by now taken an exploratory trip to the farm Several books yielded clear pictures of farm animals The discussion of these pictures helped to develop better concepts of sizes and led to consideration of safety precautions around animals Stories of trips to farms were available in a number of basal readers and some of these were read. With this background of reading, discussing, and looking at pictures, the children took their trip

Many new learnings were developed through the trip and through subsequent activities in the classroom As a class, the children decided to build a model farm in one corner of their room They divided into groups to build the house, to contruct the barn, silo, and tool sheds, to lay out the fences and the fields Everyone helped to supply farm animals from collections of toys at home In order to enlarge children's concepts of the services performed by farmers, the teacher set up a special bulletin board and a sharing table Many appropriate pictures were found in magazines In addition, butter cartons, bread wrappers empty breakfast food cartons, and labels from various appropriate canned foods were collected

Special interest groups also worked during this unit Two groups planned to find out more about farm animals, a third to learn more about what crops the farmers planted, and one group of boys to find out about tractors and other farm machinery These groups were able to do considerable independent reading They also combed magazines at home for pictures In the end each group developed a special project—scrap books of pictures and stories about farm animals a small window box garden planted with wheat and flax, a special exhibit of toys and pictures of farm machinery Individual activities were also planned—children drew pictures wrote riddles about farm animals, made their own collections of animal pictures, and read farm stories, As a culminating activity, parents were invited to visit The children conducted a guided tour of their farm told about their exhibit and reported on the work of their special groups

The reading activities for this unit were extensive It was relatively easy for the children themselves to locate farm stories in the sets of basal readers in their room This they did one day during the time normally set aside for group reading activities Each story or set of stories was then marked with a strip of colored paper Stories in the basal readers currently being used for group reading activities were read by the regular reading groups Some of the other materials were read in group sessions of the special interest groups Easy library books about farms were read independently As the unit progressed, story hours were set up when the children who worked with these books read them aloud to small groups

Experience charts were developed to summarize group plans, to record the details of the trip and to summarize special information about such topics as farm animals, what the farmer plants how the farmer works, how the farmer helps us Some additional reading was provided through the labels on the bulletin board displays and through

the special books developed by the interest groups. Then there were such related writing activities as writing thank-you notes after the trip; inviting parents; writing riddles; and preparing a picture dictionary of special farm words.

In a second grade, a study of plants and how they grow called for more specialized informational-reading skills, and gave experiences in interpreting simple charts and other visual aids.

This unit began as the children started to bring early spring flowers to school and to discuss what their fathers were doing about gardens. In some homes, seeds were already planted indoors. Several families were also growing bulbs. As the children talked, they began to share opinions about whether seeds should be started in the light or the dark, why it was important to water plants, and what seeds looked like when they started to grow. The teacher suggested that they might be able to answer some of their questions by planting some seeds in the classroom.

As plans began to develop, the children started to look through simple science textbooks. Here they began to find suggestions of types of experiments they might be able to carry out. Everyone could not read all the suggestions, but many pictures were clear. Eventually a list of questions regarding what plants need in order to grow was formulated. At the same time both teacher and children brought to the classroom different kinds of seeds. The collection eventually included samples from the smallest seeds to bulbs, acorns, and avocado pits.

As the children talked about ways of answering their questions, they decided to break into interest groups, each with special responsibilities. One group took charge of planting some beans so that they could be watched through the side of a glass as they sprouted. Another group was responsible for two sets of seeds—one placed in the light and one in a dark cupboard. A third group worked on the problem of whether plants need water, a fourth on the problem of whether soil makes a difference; and a fifth to try to get some carrot tops and a sweet potato to grow.

As a class, the children planted petunias, which they hoped would be large enough to transplant for Mother's Day. Special directions for tending this class garden were posted above it and the children took turns acting as gardeners. While these activities were going on, the teacher helped to develop concepts through discussion, through encouraging observation, and through the pictures and stories of science texts and in special books about plants and gardening. The unit ran parallel with other projects for many weeks while the children charted the growth of their plants, watched special developments in their experiments, and reported on new information as they watched their fathers' gardens.

This unit was particularly helpful in its introduction of simple reading problems involving tables, charts, and diagrams. As the children

found special pictures and diagrams in their reference books they used them as guides in planning their own projects. They also measured the growth of some of their plants, and developed a simple graph to show the progress. The children with responsibility for particular experiments posted simple records indicating exactly what they had done, and what their observations were from day to day.

Classroom records were extensive for this unit as the children listed their questions, stated the plans for the various projects, and eventually summarized their conclusions and gave the evidence they had obtained from their observations. A number of these records were composed by the groups who planned the special projects. As each new step in the story developed and was recorded, the teacher typed it in primer type and hectographed it. As a result, each group built, page by page, a story of its particular project. These the group members illustrated with as careful drawings of their plants as they could make. Copies of the books that were finally developed were popular reading at the library table for many weeks.

The reading in books that was done for this unit was not as extensive as the reading of the records the children themselves developed. The children turned to books for some of the activities later carried out by the interest groups. As their projects developed, they spent several group sessions with the teacher reading the information related to their special projects more carefully, and interpreting it in the light of what they themselves were finding out. There were also available some simple stories about gardening which served for independent reading. Meanwhile, the work of the reading groups went forward with other types of stories.

Third graders go farther afield in their quest for information. In the third grade with whose classroom this chapter began, the study of wind and of related facts about air began on a warm day as the children sat fanning themselves after a play period.

The teacher began to ask questions. 'Why are you doing that?" "Why does it make you feel cooler?" "Are you making a wind?" "Why does moving your hand make a wind?" With these questions to start them off, the children began to talk about the wind. What does it do? Why can it move things? What kinds of things can it move? Out of this and subsequent discussions came a list of specific questions. These were posted on a special chart titled *Let's Find Out.* Meanwhile the children began to look through the books from a science series and through other reference books to see what might be available to help them with their unit. Less skilled readers looked for such obvious key words as *wind* and *air.* Those with better reference techniques were able to use indexes and tables of contents quite efficiently. Each new source of information was marked with a slip of paper as it was located. While the children hunted

for material, they also observed effects of the wind and talked about what they were discovering. By the end of this exploratory period they had an extensive list of possible activities.

As the unit developed, the children were able to carry out many of their plans. The small murals of cut-out pictures showing objects blown by the wind, described in the introduction to this chapter, were completed rather early. Interest groups were set up to try to find the answers to some of the questions. As the children read they began to find suggestions of experiments they could try. The teacher added other possibilities. A science table was gradually equipped with balloons, paper bags that could be blown up, pans for demonstrations with water, pinwheels, kites, paper darts, straws to blow through, medicine droppers, and many other materials readily available in homes.

For several days the various interest groups read and tried out experiments related to their particular questions. Then, for a series of class meetings, these groups used the equipment on the science table to demonstrate their findings. As they did so, they reported on what they had learned from their reading. Class projects also developed as the children built kites and tested out various shapes of darts, paper planes, and pinwheels. As they explored they wrote—class summaries of some of their general conclusions, group summaries of special topics, individual stories, poems, and riddles. Eventually this unit, which started with interest in air in motion, lead into related questions about moisture in the air, about rain, and about other topics related to weather. Several tornado warnings heightened the general interest.

Much of the reading done for this unit was carried out individually or in interest groups. The less skilled readers worked with simple science books, while those who had the most skill explored a wide variety of materials, including several articles in the encyclopedia. Many of the children took advantage of the weekly trips to the branch library to ask the librarian for help. The teacher found time to work with individual children during independent reading periods when all were looking for information. Sessions when interest groups worked together provided time to work on group problems. These periods also made it possible for the more skilled readers to share what they had learned with those whose reading had been more restricted. For part of the time reading groups went ahead on other projects. Once or twice they worked on stories related to the unit. On a number of days they did not meet in order to allow more time for the reading problems of the interest groups.

What may be expected of children of superior ability in third grade? The reading activities of one class in which the range in reading ability was from high second- to sixth-grade skill, were as broad as those that might be expected of a typical intermediate-grade class. These youngsters came back after Christmas vacation to find that an addition to their school was being built.

Questions began to be raised immediately. Which classes were to be in the new building? When would it be ready to be used? Would it be built of the same material as their school? Would the classrooms look the same? Other questions had to do with the workmen, and with the equipment that was beginning to roll into the school ground.

Out of this unusually good opportunity for firsthand experience developed a unit that lasted for a total of nine weeks. First interests were in the new school building. As the children began to acquire information, the teacher raised questions that encouraged them to think about underlying concepts—the importance of thinking about the purpose a building is to serve in planning its blueprints; the effect of new materials and ways of working on the type of building that can be constructed; the changes that have been brought about by modern architecture. From the discussions that helped to explore these concepts came questions regarding modern homes and their contrast with homes of other lands and of other times. For much of this unit the two interests—in modern construction and in homes in other lands—ran parallel.

Firsthand experiences for the children in this third grade were many. On the day they returned to find the ground being excavated, everyone bundled into outdoor clothing and went to watch. From time to time they went out again, and on several occasions they took paper along and sketched equipment from various angles. This, incidentally, provided this class with some of its first experiences with perspective. The children also brought in pictures and saw several movies depicting dwellings in other lands. For two weeks, all who could watched a television program that described the building of a house

People came to the classroom to answer questions. Information regarding how large the new school was to be and which classes were to be in it was supplied by the principal The architect brought his blueprints. The roofing contractor brought samples of new materials, some still in experimental form. The carpenter let the children handle his tools, and later the physical education teacher loaned the group a large tray of his personal tools. One of the mothers took photographs of the building at various stages in its construction. These the children labelled and displayed on one of their bulletin boards.

Classroom displays were developed. One of the most extensive of these was an exhibit of building materials Children also brought toys from home and developed quite a collection of models of building machines. As group work connected with dwellings in other lands began to be rounded out, the children constructed small scale models of the homes about which they had been reading—an Eskimo igloo, a jungle hut, a cave, a castle, a Swiss chalet, a Roman house, a Colonial home, and a two-story stucco house.

The group organization for this unit was complicated. All worked together to raise questions, to lay general plans, to get ready to ask visitors questions, and to develop displays. Special groups were set up to study aspects of the school building process more carefully—one on materials,

one on workmen, and one on equipment. At the same time the children worked in other groups to study houses of other times.

Work periods lasted from a half hour on some days to an hour and a half on others, depending on the variety of jobs to be completed and the attention span of the group. On a number of days the children's plans called for activities with number, with reading, or with written expression that seemed as fruitful as any special experiences in these fields that might otherwise have been provided. When this was the case, the time normally used for these other areas was absorbed into the time allotment for the unit. During much of the unit, the children who were the least advanced in reading skill continued to receive regular help in a reading group.

Reading related to the unit was part of the group activities almost every day. There was no one large block of several days in which the children read intensively for information. They were encouraged to raise specific questions, to hunt for the information they needed, to share it with their groups and incorporate it in their plans, and then to go on to other questions. While they labelled exhibits, planned the blueprints for their models of homes, and decided what kinds of materials they would need, they turned again and again to books.

The basal readers with which this classroom was equipped supplied only a limited amount of information. Supplementary books contained much that was of help, the library had a number of single copies of useful books, and the encyclopedia proved to be of definite value to the more able children. Some of the reading was done individually and then reported to the interest group. Some was done in the interest-group setting. Less skilled readers read the materials available on their own level and learned much from listening as the groups worked together. Many of the children took long strides toward skillful use of reference materials as they hunted for the information they needed, took simple notes, examined blueprints, and drew plans for their own models.

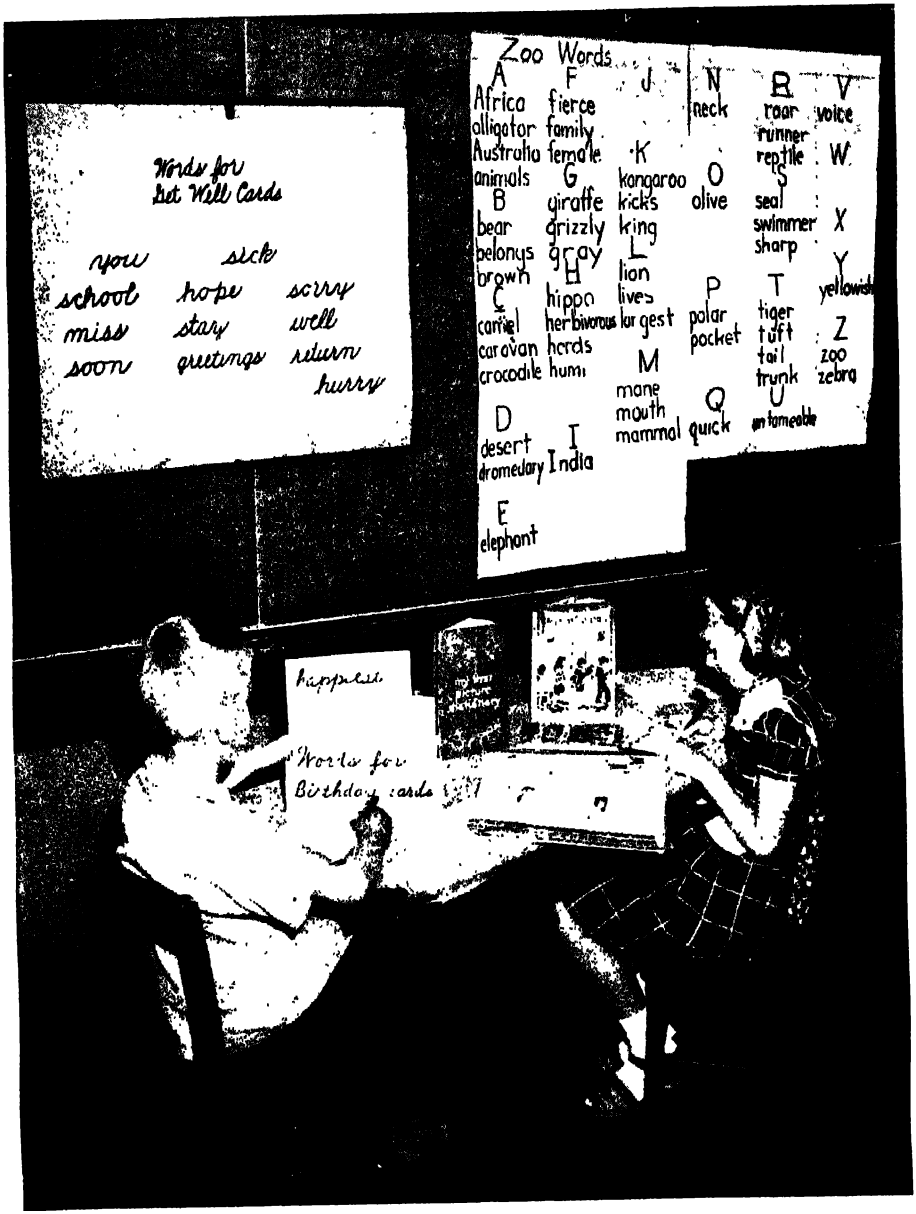
The materials developed in the classroom offered many other opportunities to read. The children kept track of their complicated projects through class plans, daily schedules, and group plans. They labelled their exhibit of materials and their display of pictures. They developed illustrated vocabulary lists of workmen and of equipment. For one week they used as a spelling list the words they felt they needed the most. As they studied words like *construction,* they discovered how helpful syllabication could be, both for reading and for spelling.

Individual records, reports, and stories accompanied every step in the unit. As many of these as possible were posted on the bulletin boards for all to read. Each child developed his own Shelter Booklet. They kept track of the steps in the construction of the new school and wrote individual stories about it. They wrote other stories about the equipment and the uses of materials. They described the houses they lived in and wrote about the kind of house they would like to build. They reviewed the movies they saw and the television program they watched. Toward



Mendel Sherman

First steps toward skillful informational reading are taken in the primary grades. Tables of contents, titles, and illustrations assume new meanings when your group writes a booklet of its own. (Copyright 1953, Board of Education, Cincinnati, Ohio.)



Mendel Sherman

Language skills are interrelated. You can use exactly the words you want in your stories and letters if you have word cards and other aids to help you spell, and it's easier to recognize the hard ones again in your reading. Grouping the words alphabetically helps to develop another word-study skill.

the end of the unit each child wrote about the kind of job he would like to hold if he were interested in construction. This served as one basis for evaluating the growth that had taken place.

Many reading skills are needed in units such as these. Children read for information. They read carefully to follow group plans and to evaluate group summaries. They learn new terms as they help to label exhibits and prepare lists of important words. They read for pleasure as they locate interesting stories related to the unit and as they share each other's creative efforts. Skill in oral reading is needed, too, as children plan ways of sharing what they have learned with other groups. These are situations that provide the extended purposeful practice that children need if there is to be maximum development of their reading skill.

Reading is a source of information in these units, but it is by no means the only source. Teachers whose classrooms are much more meagerly supplied with reference materials than the rooms that have been described still have available for their groups the opportunities to go to see, to bring materials from home, to invite visitors to share their knowledge and experience, to examine pictures, to listen to stories. Furthermore, in the classrooms that have been described the materials written by teacher and children jointly, or by children alone, make up an important part of the total reading-matter, even for groups in which there are able readers. Children need not be denied the satisfactions of working together and of exploring their world, nor need they be denied the experience of purposeful reading merely because they are in classrooms where one or two sets of adopted texts provide most of their opportunities to work with books.

Use group records of plans to help guide unit activities. Classroom records are used in many ways in the unit activities that have just been described. One of their functions is to preserve the plans that guide the unit. Several types of plans may be made. Often, at the beginning of a unit, there is a list of questions raised by the children. These are usually general, as the children do not yet have the background to explore fully the problem and teachers expect to develop broader and deeper insights as the unit unfolds. The third grade, whose unit on wind was described earlier, was helped to phrase questions that implied science principles. In a second grade at the beginning of a study of where food comes from, the questions were stated somewhat more concretely.

LET'S FIND OUT

1. Can air keep things out like a wall?
2. Can air be poured like water?
3. Can air pick up a heavy thing?
4. Does air push, even when you don't blow it or pump it?

QUESTIONS ABOUT FOOD

How many families of foods are there?
What different kinds of vegetables are there?
What different kinds of fruits are there?
What meats do we eat?
What fish do we eat?
How many different food stores are in our neighborhood?
What is a good breakfast for a school child?
What is a good lunch for a school child?

Questions may become more specific when interest groups go to work, as indicated by the shorter list made by the subcommittee on meat from the second grade mentioned above.

Which animals give us meat?
What are the names of different kinds of meat?
Which animals are the poultry we eat?
Which fish do people eat?

Plans may also describe proposed activities. When the second-grade unit on food developed to the point where the children were studying dairy products, their list of proposed activities was broad. In the third-grade unit on wind, the plans contained an equally varied list of activities.

WHAT WE WANT TO DO

1. Visit a dairy.
2. Make pictures and cartoons about milk.
3. Write and read stories about milk.
4. Build a play dairy.
5. Churn butter.
6. Mix some milk drinks.
7. Ask our mothers about foods that use milk.
8. Make milk recipe books for our mothers.
9. Have a dairy party.

OUR PLANS

1. Make experiments.
2. Paint and draw pictures.
3. Bring things from home.
4. Invite someone to tell us about the wind.
5. Write stories and riddles.
6. Read stories.
7. Have a puppet show about wind.
8. Make a frieze.
9. Make kites, planes, boats, parachutes, windmills, and pinwheels.
10. Have a kite or plane contest.

Various types of written plans can also be used to guide the day-by-day development of a unit. Many teachers make a practice of planning the daily schedule with the children and then posting it, so that all understand the sequence of activities for the day and the suggested time limits. Lists of things to do for people who finish early can be useful. Sometimes a special list of extra jobs connected with the unit, to be undertaken only if everything else has been finished, will help to enrich the program for an able child. Committee responsibilities for parts of the unit are often recorded. Lists of committee members may be helpful. So may lists of items to be brought from home. Many of these written records are planned with the children so that all are clear about what needs to be done. They help children to be more independent about the day's work, and, by so doing, they free the teacher to work where her help is most needed.

Develop new vocabulary through special records. Children who read widely and independently to locate the information they need for a unit are certain to run into new and difficult words. In the units that have been described, classroom records are used in a variety of ways to bring new terminology to the attention of the class. Because the vocabulary load is likely to be heavy, charts that can be used for reference throughout the unit may be particularly helpful. Many of these records are composed during group discussions so that new concepts are clarified as the list of words is built. How thoroughly children are expected to learn the words on such lists depends upon the ability of the class and upon the importance of the words for future reading activities. In first grade, particularly, the most useful function of some lists may be to add the terms to children's speaking vocabularies

Many different styles of vocabulary charts can be developed. Some, such as the two charts about trains that follow, summarize information while they serve as a rather extensive record of new terms. Others may be merely lists of new words. For second- and third graders who are beginning to develop dictionary skills, such lists may well be alphabetized. Even if a list is one to which the children add new terms during the course of a unit, it is possible to do some alphabetizing if sections of the chart are assigned to each letter.

After a trip to the railroad station and a short train ride to a suburban depot, a second grade worked out two charts that helped to review many of the new words. Not all children could read the entire lists, but they became more familiar with the words they contained as they returned to them at many points during the unit.

WHAT WE SAW

The big terminal
The big waiting room
The big rest room
The big restaurant
The big windows of the ticket window
The big baggage check room
The passenger gates and ramp
The Cincinnatian
The control tower
Many many tracks
Many many freight trains
Passenger trains
Steam engines
Diesel engines
The big round house
The many helpers on the train
Oakley station

THE TRAIN

There are two kinds of trains

1. The freight train
 The freight train carries freight.

2. The passenger train
 The passenger train carries people.

The freight train has	The passenger train has
Engine	Engine
Tender	Mail car
Box car	Baggage car
Coal car	Pullman cars
Flat car	Coaches
Cattle car	Dining car
Refrigerator car	Club car
	Observation car

Illustrations and articles for display are particularly helpful in developing the new vocabulary related to a unit. In the third grade whose study of the new building was reported earlier, the children learned new terms rapidly through their lists of workmen and equipment and through their exhibit of materials. Captions to the pictures on the classroom bulletin boards helped to review new terms.

Frequently, vocabulary lists serve as an aid both to reading and to creative writing. Some groups build picture dictionaries of words they need. Others may develop their own file boxes of needed words. Often the lists are posted. In one first grade, where a unit on birds led to considerable creative writing, a bulletin board contained pictures of common birds clearly labelled. To give added help the following word lists were posted:

WORDS ABOUT BIRDS

1. nest
2. lays
3. grass
4. find
5. white
6. worm
7. egg
8. house
9. fly
10. yard

LITTLE WORDS

the	this
is	we
are	was
our	come
in	came
on	play
at	have
it	see

These children were interested in writing other creative stories and several new lists were in the process of being built—words about kites, words about rain, words about boats. All of these lists were posted on one bulletin board, which was serving as a center for creative-writing activities.

In the classrooms that have been described, further assistance in acquiring new vocabulary is given through the many classroom records that use the new terms and through the materials in textbooks and supplementary books. It is this planned repetition of vocabulary in many settings that makes it possible for a teacher and a primary class to go so far afield in the reading activities connected with units of work.

Add to the available reading materials through records summarizing information. Mention has been made at several points in this chapter and in preceding chapters of the value of classroom records as summaries of information. These records may vary greatly in length. At times a single chart will tell the complete story; at others a series of charts will be composed. Typical of the varied records that can be developed in the course of a unit are those of the second grade whose plans to study food were reported earlier. These were able children and the vocabulary load in the records is heavier than that with which second graders of limited ability should be expected to cope. They summarized their trip to the dairy in the following news bulletin:

THE DAIRY

We went to a dairy.
We watched the men work
at the dairy.
We learned about their
work to give us
good milk to drink.
We visited the dairy
down the street.
It is interesting to see
the dairymen pasteurize
and bottle milk.
They work hard for us.

Later, with the technical knowledge of the teacher to help, they prepared the following more extensive record, which covered two large sheets of oak tag.

THE STORY OF MILK

Farmers milk cows. They put the milk into big cans. They keep the milk cool until the milk truck comes. Then they send the cans of milk to the dairy.

At the dairy the milk cans are emptied and washed. Then the cans are put on trucks and sent back to the farmers.

At the dairy the milk is weighed and sampled. It is pumped up to the big storage tanks through long pipes.

Then the milk is strained to take out any dirt. Next it is pasteurized to kill any germs. Big paddles stir the milk while it is being heated.

Now the milk is cooled by letting it run down over refrigerator pipes.

After that the milk goes to a bottling machine. It is put into bottles which have been washed very clean in the bottle washing machine.

Then the bottles of milk have caps and tops put on them. They are put into cases, and the cases are stored in the great big refrigerator room.

Milkmen come to the refrigerator room. They take cases of milk out to the loading platform. They put the milk on their milk trucks.

The milkmen take the milk to homes, stores, schools, and other places. Then we drink the milk.

And that is the story of milk!

As part of the study of food, several children volunteered to interview the proprietor of one establishment handling food while others in the class listened. With the help of the teacher and the rest of the group each child summarized his interview, and illustrated the finished chart. The series of charts that resulted were held together with rings and placed on an easel at a convenient height for children to read.

THE STORE KEEPER'S WORK

Marie asked, "What work do you do?"
The store keeper said,
"I order fresh fruits and vegetables.
I clean them up and put them
out on my counters.
I wait on customers.
I take orders over the telephone.
I deliver fruits and vegetables.
That is what I do."

New vocabulary was reviewed through group summaries of where the children had been and what people they had seen:

Food Places We Visited	Food Workers We Met	
A dairy	Farmers	Store Keepers
A fruit and vegetable store	Dairymen	Bakers
A bakery	Milkmen	Butchers
A super market	Truck Drivers	Clerks
	Cooks	

In the third-grade unit on wind, described earlier, a single chart summarized a rather extensive discussion. Evidence of growth in sensitivity to accurate choice of words shows in the terms the children used.

	Wind
1. flies	Kites, balloons, planes, and parachutes
2. blows	Hats, trash can lids, roofs, leaves, paper, hair, seeds, dirt, dust, snow, rain, people, doors, clothes, and umbrellas
3. moves	Clouds and water
4. knocks down	Signs, trees, wire fences, telephone poles, fruits from trees, and flower pots
5. dries	Wash, streets, and pavements
6. turns	Windmills and pinwheels
7. breaks	Glass
8. spreads	Fire
9. sways	Trees and flowers
10. sails	Boats
11. cools	Things, people, and animals

Work-type reviews of information can be posted in chart form. In a first-grade room a study of growing things was reviewed through a series of riddles printed on small charts. Some of these were written by the teacher and some by the children. In a second grade another form of riddle was used, for which the children were to draw the correct answer:

What Am I?

I am green
I grow on trees
I am little in spring
Then I grow bigger.
What am I?

Autumn Animal Riddles

Who flies south in autumn?
Who goes to sleep?
Who stores food?
Who changes color?
Who grows a heavy coat?
Who makes a warm home?
Who swims way down to the bottom of the pond?

For review purposes, children may also be given matching activities, where they draw lines from key words to the correct pictures. They may answer yes-no questions, choose the right answer in a multiple-choice statement, or mark statements true or false. If their study has involved a sequence of steps, they may rearrange phrase cards to put the steps in order. They may label pictures, or draw pictures to indicate the correct answer. These are devices that are used for work-type activities in connection with the work of reading groups. They can be equally helpful in unit activities, and the same general principles regarding the need for interest and for thought-provoking questions still hold.

Group summaries of information are not the only ones used in a typical primary classroom. Children also write their own materials. Typically, the less skilled the group the more likely pictures are to be used as the form of individual expression. However, short written statements are possible if the teacher helps. In the first grade whose lists of words about birds were given earlier, the available bird books were too difficult for the children to read. The teacher, therefore, provided the needed information by reading to the group. Then, with the help of the word lists and some individual guidance from the teacher, each child wrote and illustrated stories for his own bird book. Some of these were very simple; some conveyed considerable information.

CARDINALS	ORIOLES
Cardinals stay in winter.	Orioles have a hanging nest.
The cardinals are red.	Orioles are black and orange.
Can you see the cardinals?	They lay white eggs.

By third grade, the children with the greatest skill in written expression can produce rather extensive records. In the Shelter Booklets compiled by the third grade whose unit was described earlier, were to be found lists of new words; chapters on workmen, equipment, and materials, and reports of the work of the group to which the child had belonged when he studied homes in other lands. It is also possible to develop booklets that are combinations of group and individual work. Short articles containing important information may be composed as experience records and later copied by each child for his booklet. Then creative stories and pictures may be added by each child individually.

Written expression, oral expression, and reading are closely inter-

related in primary classrooms. Children talk about what they have seen; they help to dictate records as a group; they write their own reports; and they read, both to locate information and to review the information they have helped to record.

Building Readiness for the Reading Problems of the Content Fields

Help children become acquainted with different formats of books. First steps toward reading the varied materials of the content fields are taken in the primary grades. One of the adjustments the reader must be able to make is to texts written in a style that is different from the stories in basal readers and from simple recreational books. Primary teachers help children develop readiness for this both through the way they introduce the first textbooks in arithmetic, spelling, science, health, and social studies, and through the varied classroom records they use.

Children have many opportunities to read arithmetic materials in the typical primary classroom. In the beginning, first-graders' experiences with numbers come through work with concrete objects. They may count to see how many are absent at their table, or they may get the correct number of crayons for their table or decide how many more chairs they need for the reading group. Opportunities to read numbers soon present themselves. In the early fall, one teacher prepared a prereading chart giving the prices of the school lunch and of the extra milk so that her children could be sure they had enough lunch money. Children learn to watch a calendar for birthdays. They also use it to count the weeks to special holidays or to keep track of how long it takes seeds to sprout. They may be given other experiences in reading numbers through following simple recipes, reading a short list of prices in a play store, following simple directions for scoring a game, and reading rules that show how many children may work in the playhouse or paint at the easel. First-grade teachers also use many different charts to show number groupings, simple money values, and ways of telling time.

The same functional use of numbers found in first-grade classrooms can also be observed in second and third grades. However there should be less need of concrete number groupings and greater ability to read the Arabic symbols. Readiness for large numbers was developed in a second grade through a daily record of attendance and, at the beginning of the new year, in a summary of the class discussion of days, weeks, and seasons.

ROOM 104 NEWS
We have 18 boys.
We have 15 girls.
We have 33 children.

The year is 1955.
It will have 4 seasons.
It will have 12 months.
It will have 52 weeks.
It will have 365 days.

Children in another second grade faced problems of reading numbers when they planned to fill Red Cross boxes. The original list of suggestions, giving the prices of which children were sure, looked as follows:

THINGS FOR THE RED CROSS BOXES

1. *Things for good health*
tooth brush 10¢ soap 10¢
toothpaste or powder 10¢
washcloth 10¢ buttons 10¢
pocket comb 10¢

2. *Things for school*
pencils 5¢ erasers 5¢
notebooks 5¢ crayons 5¢
drawing paper 5¢

3 *Things to wear*
tie? beads 10¢
ribbon 10¢ hankie 10¢
barrette 10¢ socks?
scarf?

4 *Things for play*
ball 10¢ top 10¢ yo yo 10¢
marbles 5¢ puzzle doll 5¢
whistle 5¢ play watch 10¢
games? toys?

Later, the purchases were made and the budget was drawn up:

THE THINGS WE BOUGHT

The Girl's Box		*The Boy's Box*	
crayons	5¢	crayons	5¢
pencils	5¢	pencils	5¢
notebook	5¢	notebook	5¢
drawing paper	5¢	drawing paper	5¢
eraser	5¢	eraser	5¢
toothbrush	10¢	toothbrush	10¢
soap	10¢	soap	10¢
comb	10¢	comb	10¢
washcloth	10¢	washcloth	10¢
ball	10¢	ball	10¢
top	5¢	top	5¢
doll	10¢	yo yo	10¢
hair ribbon	5¢	play watch	10¢
barrette	5¢	whistle	5¢
whistle	5¢		
	$1.05		$1.05

Experience with the step-by-step reading that is often required in reading science materials can be given by classroom records of science activities. Children in one second grade made an accurate report of their study of safety measures with icy streets:

A Winter Experiment for Good Citizens

We put a pan of water
out on the window sill.
The water froze into the ice.

We felt the ice.
It was slippery.

Then we put ashes on
part of the ice.
The ashes made the ice rough.

Then we put salt
on part of the ice.
The salt melted the ice.

Be a good citizen
in the winter time.
Shovel snow off your walk.
Put ashes or salt on your icy
walk.

Then your mother and father
won't fall.
Then your friends and neighbors
won't fall.

On another day, this group experimented with problems of aerodynamics. The winning designs of the paper planes were posted together with the record of what happened:

Our Contest

We had a contest to find out how to shape paper to make it travel through the air. Everyone made paper airplanes.

We went up to the gym to fly our paper airplanes. Louis was the judge. He measured how far each airplane went.

Patsy and Dorothy won for the girls. Larry won for the boys.

Patsy's airplane went 33 feet.
Dorothy's airplane went 27 feet.
Larry's airplane went 35, 19, and 22 feet.

First contacts with the formats of language and of spelling texts can also be given through classroom records. Models of the correct form for a letter are frequently seen on primary chalkboards. Very early, the letter itself is likely to be a group composition that is copied by the children. Simple illustrative sentences to show the uses of periods and question marks may be posted. So may one or two rules

that the children have learned about using capital letters or ending sentences with periods. First lists of spelling words may be built from the words the children in the particular group seem to need the most frequently for their own writing. One second-grade teacher previewed the style of the adopted speller by presenting new words in the following chart form:

YOUR CLOTHES

Does your mother say this?
"Where are your cap and coat?
It is almost time for school."
Does your father say this?
"Is that your new hat by the door?
You must take good care of what we gave you."

hat	coat	new	say	cap
your	gave	where	school	door

As children begin to use simple textbooks in the various content fields, teachers frequently take time to work with these books as they would with a basal reader. The children may be given time to examine the book, to look at its table of contents, to talk about its general format. Then, as the first materials are actually read, time is taken to help the children identify special aspects of the format that will be useful to them. This may include noting where the list of new words is placed on the page of a speller; talking about the way a language or an arithmetic book sets a rule apart in a special box, or noting the use of section and paragraph headings in a science or a social studies book. This introductory discussion is followed by further help, both to groups and to individuals, as new uses are made of the books and new problems are faced.

Develop familiarity with simple illustrative aids. The skillful reader of materials in the content fields must be able to use pictures, graphs, maps, and tables to interpret what he is reading. Readiness for these reading problems, too, is developed in the primary grades. Pictures are a source of information from the first day of school. First-graders learn to read a number of other simple legends. Among these may be clock faces to tell when it is time for recess, for noon lunch, and for clean-up and simple legends to record the weather for the day. They may also become acquainted with tables as the teacher records their weights and heights, and with graphs as she develops simple devices to show how many mothers are members of the P.T.A. or how many children have visited the dentist.

As second- and third-graders grow, both in their reading skill and in their ability to use numbers, their contacts with various kinds of visual aids increase. They may keep more elaborate records in simple charts or tabular forms—a record of the weather; a series of drawings of plants to show how fast a window-box garden is growing; drawings of two plants to show size comparisons under different growing conditions; a bar graph made by pasting pictures of books or other symbols after names to show how many library books each child has read; a chart classifying objects in the classroom museum. More skilled readers may also work with simple diagrams. In the third grades for which the units were described earlier, there were opportunities to follow a diagram for making a kite, to examine the blueprints of the new school building, and to make simple diagrams of the dwellings the children themselves proposed to construct. Third-graders may also have occasion to draw a map of their school grounds or of the neighborhood in which their school is located. Even first- and second-graders may occasionally draw a very simple map as they make a model of their community or mark the streets on which their homes are located.

Many of the experiences in interpreting illustrative aids provided for primary children are those in which the children actually help to construct the table, the graph, or the map. They learn how these devices convey information because they have used them for their own purposes. Later they will bring this understanding to the more technical informational material of the intermediate grades.

Help children take their first steps in using reference techniques. Informational-reading activities expand manyfold primary children's experiences in locating information. By the end of the third grade, the children should have become acquainted with many kinds of reference materials. The start is made through basal readers, supplementary books, and a few simple library books. Teachers add new types of reference materials as soon as they feel children are ready for them. If the entire class is not ready for a new experience, time may be taken to work specially with the group of more skilled readers. Sometimes a new resource, such as an encyclopedia, which may be used occasionally is discussed by the group as a whole in third grade, so that all know its general purposes, and then better readers are given help as they work with it individually. Children may be given further help in exploring a variety of resource materials by being encouraged to read children's newspapers, to bring from home pictures clipped

from adult newspapers and magazines, and even to write for pamphlets. Often the teacher builds readiness for later use of more difficult books by showing the pictures to the children and by reading appropriate parts aloud. Much of the child's skill in using reference books will be developed in the intermediate grades. However, because of his experience in the primary grades, he comes to this task already aware of the great variety of material that is available to him.

Children also make strides in learning to locate materials. Even the first-graders whose activities have been described are able to use pictures and titles of books and stories to help them locate the material they need. These youngsters typically know how to find page numbers and what help to expect from a table of contents. More skilled readers in second, and particularly in third grade, develop more effective techniques in hunting for the material they need. Many will use tables of contents and some will be able to find obvious topics in an index. Often, some of the first reading periods related to a unit are spent looking through books and marking appropriate stories. Sometimes children develop simple bibliographies by listing the titles of books and the page numbers appropriate to their groups. As the teacher works with groups and with individuals, there are opportunities to ask what the children are using as clues to the information they need, to help them think about related topics that might yield additional information, and to demonstrate the value of looking carefully at chapter titles and section headings.

First acquaintance with alphabetical order may even come as beginners examine the alphabet books on their library table. More interest is built when children begin to look at a picture dictionary. By second grade, charts containing needed spelling words are sometimes put in alphabetical order. Better readers in third grade should develop increased skill, with the dictionary and even with the alphabetical arrangement of the encyclopedia.

Summarizing and note-taking, too, begin very simply in the primary grades. Many of the children's first summaries are done as a group when they compose a record of a trip they have taken, tell what they think is most significant about a motion picture they have seen, or indicate what they think should be remembered of materials the teacher has read to them. As more skill in written expression develops, they begin to write their own reports. At first these may be only a few lines long. Later three or four short stories on the same

topic may be collected into the types of booklets that have been described earlier.

Note-taking is not likely to begin much before third grade. Even here, one or two sentences expressing a general idea are about as much as can be expected. Sometimes the process can be facilitated by simple summary charts. In one third grade, for example, the children who were reading about Indians were given a hectographed sheet divided into columns for such information as clothing, houses, food, and games. In the appropriate column the children wrote one or two words to help them remember the information they had found. Later they met to compare their lists. Written expression is not easy for all primary children and note-taking is a demanding task. The thrill of finding needed information should not be spoiled by too difficult an assignment to write it down.

If the resources of a school or a community library are available, teachers make a practice of helping children become acquainted with it. In their own library corner they are likely to find books that have public library call numbers. As beginners they may take a special trip to see the library. A little later they may borrow easy books and perhaps enjoy a story time planned by the librarian. By third grade they are likely to enlist the librarian's help in finding books on topics of special interest.

Experiences with reference techniques are informal in the primary grades. This is, for the most part, a period for developing readiness. Children use as effective techniques as they are able. They may spend some group sessions discussing how to be more efficient in finding the materials they want and they may be given help from the teacher as they work, but they are not likely to engage in many work-type experiences to develop increased skill. Later, in the intermediate grades, it may be helpful to devote both group reading activities and work-type experiences to polishing reference skills. Examples of such activities are given in Chapters XI and XII.

Provide reading experiences that call for skill in adjusting reading techniques to varied purposes. The skillful reader is adept in his ability to adjust the way he reads to his purposes. Earlier it was suggested that stories in basal readers should be handled so that children have an opportunity to develop varied reading skills. Experiences with informational reading offer many additional functional situations in which it is important for children to adjust their reading techniques to the problems they face.

Teachers can be more effective in helping children learn to read for many purposes if they are sensitive to the opportunities offered in their classrooms. The summaries that follow indicate typical situations that call for varied reading skills. The organization used in this section is planned in the same general pattern as that used for the similar summary given in Chapter VII. Situations calling for children to read directions have been classified here under a separate heading, since the typical primary classroom provides such varied experiences in this area. Similar analyses of the situations faced by more skilled readers in the intermediate grades are given in Chapter XI.

Critical evaluation is called for in: Deciding whether a classroom record is accurate; telling other children what you think about a library book; deciding whether the pictures in a book agree with what was actually seen on an excursion; rereading class plans to make sure all proposals have been included; deciding which of a set of experience records will best inform parents about a class project; rethinking classroom rules to be sure they really say what was meant; checking when two books disagree; deciding when the questions raised for unit activities have been answered; appraising the accuracy of a caption to a picture; deciding which of several books is most helpful for a specific problem; recommending reading to other children; distinguishing between factual and fictional books related to a unit.

Reading for the general gist of a passage is called for in: Enjoying recreational reading where the plot of the story is the main purpose for reading; reporting the gist of a story to other children; answering riddles made up by other children; illustrating a mimeographed story or an experience chart; rereading an experience record to be sure it has covered all pertinent points; skimming books or experience records to locate specific items of information; checking an experience record to be sure it reports events as they actually happened; following various classroom plans; planning the scenes for a dramatization related to a unit.

Reading with careful attention to details is needed for: Noting special information such as dates and times on messages to be taken home; checking on special regulations for use of classroom equipment; rereading an experience record to be sure a trip is reported accurately; checking the details of a chart before drawing illustrations for it; editing one's creative story after the teacher has hectographed it; checking lists of materials needed for a special project; helping prepare a weather chart or a news record; checking class plans as work progresses; noting special signs on bulletin boards; making sure a classroom collection is properly labelled; doing independent reading to answer specific questions raised in connection with a unit; knowing pertinent details in order to tell other children about recreational reading; reading independently to follow up a special hobby or interest.

Skill in following directions is needed for: Reading charts describing how to carry out various housekeeping responsibilities; carrying out unit plans in order; reading recipes; reading directions for work-type activities in various skill areas; carrying out school regulations regarding fire drill or safety on playground; carrying out a special science experiment; making gifts according to simple written directions; checking the accuracy of the report of a science experiment; acting on special announcements from the principal's office; following written instructions for classroom games; checking daily plans to decide what activities to take on next.

Adjustments of reading speed are needed in: Skimming material to locate specific information; reading a long article quickly to see if it contains items of particular interest; finding needed material and then reading it carefully to report on it; rereading to locate the evidence when a point is disputed; reading carefully when directions are involved.

Oral-reading experiences are afforded through: Reading classroom rules aloud; reading plans a step at a time while others check; reading aloud an item on the bulletin board not easily seen by children at their desks; reading a story to a small group; sharing in choral speaking of poems related to the unit; reading special information to the group that needs it; reading an experience record aloud while others listen to check its accuracy; reading in an experience record the lines which provide the specific information needed to settle an argument; reading the story you have written to the class; reading the caption under your picture to the class.

New vocabulary is developed through: Preparing and using vocabulary lists needed for a unit; preparing a picture dictionary of words appropriate to a unit; developing a list of spelling words needed for the writing activities related to a unit; drawing pictures illustrating new terms and concepts; labelling exhibits or pictures; developing lists that classify new terms.

Reference techniques are needed for: Finding information by studying pictures and reading captions; using a table of contents to locate needed information; finding an article in an encyclopedia; using chapter and section headings in deciding whether a book contains needed information; finding a word needed for spelling in an alphabetical class list; reading the headlines in a children's weekly newspaper; writing book reviews and reading the book reviews written by other children; reading simple maps related to school or community; preparing simple charts or graphs; taking one- or two-sentence notes; helping to compose a group or class summary of materials read.

Broad interests in reading are developed through: Becoming acquainted with various reference books; exploring library books in a search for information; enjoying fictional stories related to the general topic of a unit; writing group stories; sharing creative stories written by individual children; locating related topics in basal readers; listening to stories related to the unit read by the teacher.

ENCOURAGING RECREATIONAL READING

Children who come to the intermediate grades eager to read have been given their start by primary teachers. Library corners are important centers in the classrooms that have been described. Opportunities to read for fun and experiences to develop new reading interests and more discriminating reading tastes are considered to be an integral part of the reading program. What steps can be taken to help children learn to enjoy reading, just for the fun of reading?

Make the library corner attractive. In most primary classrooms the library corner is an inviting place to work. It is typically located in a part of the room where children can read quietly. When possible, bookshelves flank at least one side, so that books are easily available. Sometimes the bookshelves are used as a partial partition from the rest of the room. If there is a bulletin board near by, it may be saved for special displays pertaining to recreational reading—bright book covers, pictures to stimulate reading related to a specific problem, a poem, interesting book reports from the children themselves, or records of their reading. Sometimes a rocking chair or some wicker furniture adds to the home-like atmosphere.

Children can help to make their library corner attractive. If the furniture consists of regular classroom equipment, the members of the class may sew attractive chintz covers for the backs of the chairs, or make a runner for the table. Flowers or plants may help to brighten the table or the bookcases. Sometimes it will be possible to paint the furniture a gay color. If extra space is needed for books, the children may help to finish orange-crate cases. The children may also help to care for the books. Even beginners can decide how to keep the book cases and the table tidy, and how to handle the books carefully. More mature children may appoint a librarian, discuss simple classifications for their books, and even work out a system of simple library cards to be filled in when a book is borrowed.

New books help to attract readers to the classroom library. Frequently these will be borrowed from the school or the local library. When children can visit the library and help to select the books they want, there is an added incentive to read. Sometimes they will bring books from home. These can be shown to the class during a sharing period and then left on the library table to be examined. If the school allows a petty cash fund for each class, children may also have the experience of helping to buy one or two new books for their room.

Suggestions for choosing books for the classroom library have been made in Chapter VII. Children will turn to the library table more frequently if it contains books to meet varied interests. Informational materials should be provided as well as fiction. Thin books should be available as well as thick ones—a slow reader needs to have the fun of finishing a book quickly. Easy books should outnumber difficult ones. In the first grade, particularly, there is a definite place for large picture books, for supplementary preprimers, and for simple teacher-made materials which even the reader with the most limited skill can enjoy.

Provide time and opportunity to enjoy recreational reading. Part of the problem of encouraging recreational reading is providing time for it. As the total primary program was described in Chapter VI, definitely scheduled periods for recreational reading were foreseen, and definite times were suggested to allow children to share their recreational reading with others in the class. In Chapter VII, reading units developed around recreational-reading interests were described. It is also possible to set up special story clubs where children of like interests meet to share their reading. One third grade was divided into three book clubs. Their reading-matter ranged from first-grade picture books to some fourth-grade material. Once a week the clubs met to share their pleasure in *Little Toot* [8] and in *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel;* [9] to introduce new friends to other members of their group as they became acquainted with *Mei Li* [10] and *Billy and Blaze;* [11] and to laugh at the misadventures of *Curious George* [12] and of *Timothy Turtle.*[13] The children also became interested in the factual material in such books as *The First Book of Trains,*[14] *Goldfish,*[15] and *Stripe.*[16] Before the end of the year, the children not only were reading library books but writing their own creative stories as well. In addition to these other recreational-reading opportunities the reading activities related to the units described earlier in this chapter can be planned so that there is time to read fictional as well as informational material connected with the unit.

[8] Hardie Gramatky, *Little Toot* New York G. B Putnam's Sons, 1939.
[9] Virginia Lee Burton, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939.
[10] Thomas Handforth *Mei Li* New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1938
[11] Clarence Anderson, *Billy and Blaze* New York The Macmillan Company 1936.
[12] H. A Rey, *Curious George* Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941
[13] Alice Davis, *Timothy Turtle.* New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, Inc 1948.
[14] Campbell Latam, *The First Book of Trains.* New York Franklin Watts, Inc., 1948.
[15] Herbert S Zim, *Goldfish.* New York William R Morrow and Company, 1947
[16] Robert M. McClung, *Stripe.* New York William R. Morrow and Company, 1951.

Recreational reading need not always be classified as such on the weekly schedule. The important thing is to provide an opportunity for children to enjoy books, whether it be in a special period, part of the work of a reading group, an aspect of a unit of work, or a free time activity.

Plan for experiences that help to develop reading tastes. Out of his total reading experiences, a primary child should be expected to begin to develop standards for evaluating what he reads. Reading tastes do not grow from one aspect of the reading program alone; every experience contributes. The richer the total program, the more likely it is that sensitive reading tastes will grow.

Standards are developed, in part, through work in reading groups. Here the children begin to make discriminations as they read for different purposes—this story was very amusing; this one kept you guessing, right to the end; this was exciting because it really happened; fairy stories and tall tales are fun, they start you imagining. When group activities are developed as reading units there are opportunities to contrast several stories, to discuss why those by a favorite author are so well liked, and perhaps to go to the library to find others of his books. The stories and poems in basal readers are selected for their literary merit, as well as for the experience with new vocabulary and more complex sentence and paragraph structure that they provide. This aspect of their construction needs to be capitalized upon.

Nothing helps to develop reading tastes much more effectively than the quality of the books available for recreational reading. Library tables need to be stocked with care. Often parents can be helped to surround the child with equally worth-while books at home if they are supplied with suggestions for Christmas gifts or for summer reading. However, it is important not to confuse the literary qualities of a book with its difficulty. Nothing is much more likely to dampen enthusiasm than to be told that a book is too easy; that good readers should be reading longer books; that, after all, the story is for much younger children. Children are more apt to read widely if they enjoy what they read, and they are more likely to enjoy what they read if they can read with ease.

Times when library books are being shared give opportunities to develop standards. Enthusiasm about a story can be picked up by the teacher with such questions as, "Why did you like it?" "What made it exciting?" "Why do you think it was so funny?" Standards can be

formulated as children decide which stories to read to another class, or to share with another reading group. Sometimes the period before library books are to be returned can be turned into an evaluation session. "Did you like your book?" "Would other children like it?" "To whom would you recommend it?" "Why?"

Children learn to appreciate good literature through satisfying experiences with their own creative writing. This means, in part, being sensitive to opportunities for creative expression. These opportunities present themselves in many ways—invitations and letters can be creative; the hum of the machinery seen on an excursion can suggest a song; a foggy day or a bright traffic light outside the window of a city classroom can bring forth some imaginative stories; holidays can call for poems, songs, and plays; even the information that goes into a social-studies or science booklet can be phrased in one's own way, and illustrated with one's own pictures.

The teacher also needs to be alert to opportunities to develop awareness of apt expressions. In composing a group record, someone may choose just the right words to tell what he saw. Two children may suggest lines that have the rhythm and rhyme of a poem. In writing a Hallowe'en story a child may have the very phrase that makes the ending sound scary. Children need to be helped to become sensitive to these evidences of creative ability in themselves and in their friends.

Special care needs to be taken to expand children's interest in poetry. Throughout the primary grades, experiences with poetry are more likely to involve listening and sharing orally than they are to call for the reading of poems. However, by third grade, some children may begin to enjoy reading their favorite poems for themselves. In one class a teacher shared her collection of poems with the children by mimeographing favorites that were appropriate for special projects. These the children put into their own "poetry books." Soon the youngsters themselves began to bring in poems. Usually it was the teacher who read these aloud to the group. The resulting discussions did much to develop more sensitive listeners, and the best of these contributions, too, went into the poetry books.

Classrooms in which children develop broad reading interests and sensitive reading tastes are typically those in which children hear many stories and poems well read by the teacher. They grow to love good literature because they are under the guidance of someone who also loves it, and who expresses her appreciation in her voice and her

manner. They catch her enthusiasm as they listen to her read *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*[17] or enjoy with her the sounds of the strange words in *Scrambled Eggs Super,*[18] and they share their delight in a new story with her because they are sure of an enthusiastic and sensitive response. Perhaps nothing is as important in the development of children's tastes as the attitudes and appreciations of the adults who introduce them to books.

Reading is one of the receptive language arts. Listening is another. Speaking and writing are the expressive aspects of the language arts program. In actual practice these aspects are closely interrelated. Children talk. They write their ideas or they watch while their ideas are being written. They share their own creative expression. They enjoy the creative expressions of others. They listen in appreciation when the teacher reads to them and they read with appreciation when they read to others. Love of reading, appreciation of good writing, and satisfaction in expressing one's own ideas in writing develop together in the classroom where the language arts program is guided the most effectively.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING THE ON-GOING READING ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIMARY GRADES

Do the signs and notices around the classroom serve a purpose important to the group?

Are children encouraged to read as widely for information as their skill will permit?

In unit activities, is effective use made of classroom records composed by teacher and children?

Are unit activities scheduled so that there is time to give help with group and with individual reading problems?

In the informational reading activities related to a unit, are both materials and help provided so that children are able to read with groups working on topics of interest to them?

Are children encouraged to use reference skills as effectively as they are able?

Are informational-reading activities planned to develop readiness for more extensive reading in the content fields?

Are the books on the library table selected so that they contribute to better reading tastes?

Are children helped to develop standards for their choice of books through their experiences in discussing and sharing them?

[17] Theodore Geisel, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* New York: Vanguard Press, Inc., 1937.

[18] Theodore Geisel, *Scrambled Eggs Super!* New York Random House, Inc., 1953.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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See also the references suggested under *Developing Reading Interests and Tastes* at the end of Chapter XI.

CHAPTER IX

HELPING PRIMARY CHILDREN LEARN TO WORK WITH WORDS

SOME CLASSES WORK WITH WORDS

Whenever children are reading, they are meeting word study problems. The more independent they become, the more skilled they are in solving these problems for themselves. What would some of their efforts look like, if an observer were to take a quick trip through an elementary school?

First-graders begin to discover ways of telling words apart. In the first grade early in September, Betty could recognize her own name. She said that it began with a tall, fat letter and had a tail at the end of it. Archie also knew his name and was happy to spell it to anyone who would listen. Several children soon learned to recognize the word *Birthdays* because it was the longest word on the bulletin board. However, when it was first used in an experience record, only two or three were sure of it. When Sally began to work in a preprimer, she persisted in saying *Daddy* for *Father* for several days.

Now, later in the year, the word *February* is used in a class record. Although it is a new word to the reading group, Jean says, "That's where we put the date and it's February today, isn't it?" Owen exclaims, "It starts with *F*." There is a scramble to see how many other words beginning with *f* appear in various notices around the room. The children do not yet know all the letters of the alphabet, but they are familiar with many of them. When the teacher asks if they can name some words beginning with the sound of *f*, *fish, father,* and *fun* are given. When the word *fan* appears in a new story, several children can pronounce it without help. Reading *fans* presents little difficulty after this, and several guess *fanning* correctly when it occurs in the context.

Second-graders show increased familiarity with structural and phonetic elements. In the second grade across the hall, the children do not puzzle long over the word *inside*. Someone says, "It starts with *in*" and another

voice adds, "And the last part says *side*" Several children figure out *dancing* because they know it begins like *dance* *Silly* causes difficulty for many, but someone points out that the *ill* is the same sound that is in *Bill's* name and with the teacher's help the children add the *s* and the *y* When the children come to the word *squirrel* they remember it from its general configuration *Fiddle* causes more difficulty because few children know what it is After the teacher tells them how to pronounce it, they look back to the picture and decide that it looks like a violin

On an easel is a chart printed on oak tag prepared by this group to show the ways they know of attacking new words It reads as follows

HOW TO STUDY A WORD[1]

Look at the picture
Think about the story
Look at the shape of the word
See how the word begins
See how the word ends
Think of a twin word
Skip over the word and read to the end of
the story, then think what is needed
Look for a little word inside

Third-graders work with less common word-parts and longer and less familiar words In another room third graders are puzzling over the word *frighten* Their teacher puts *right* and *sight* under each other on the board They say the two familiar words and decide on the sound of *ight* Then they try it with *fr* as a beginning and, having been successful that far, add the *en* to the end and reread the context to be sure it fits They have little trouble with *suppertime* as they know the two words that make it up The word *alligator* is one the teacher reads for them, but they have previously looked at the picture and know that there is an alligator in the story Several are ready for it when they meet it in context *Nonsense* is also new, but someone knows *sense* and someone else sees *on* at the beginning Not everyone knows the meaning, but Janet says that is what her mother says to her when she's being silly On the bulletin board are lists titled, *Our Pioneer Words* and *Words We Learned at the Post Office*

Sixth-graders demonstrate the effectiveness of word-study techniques accumulated through varied and extensive experiences. In one corner of the bulletin board upstairs in the sixth grade there is a list of new science terms, each with the definition opposite it Another list contains place names in the daily news Next to each name is a simple phonetic pronunciation key These words are attached with colored strings to the appropriate place on a world map nearby In the science discussion, the children read the word *deflected* They have no trouble breaking it into

[1] This chart was written by the children in Mrs Louise Rairden's second grade the Louis M Schiel School Cincinnati

prefix, root, and suffix for pronunciation purposes, but what does it mean? Some say it is another way of spelling *reflected.* Someone goes to the dictionary to find out. After the definition has been read the children look up *reflect* and discuss the similar roots and the meaning of the prefixes. Then they test out the prefix *de* in words such as *de*tach and *de*rail.

A reader is not truly independent until he has techniques for working out the meaning and pronunciation of words for himself. The children in a typical class will differ in their word-study skills just as they will differ in other reading techniques. Not all the children in the classrooms described earlier will be able to respond with equal ease to the word-study problems they face. Some will have limited meaning vocabularies. Some will find the task of learning to see or to hear a common sound element in two words particularly difficult. Others will forge ahead with discovery after discovery, seemingly independent in their word-study techniques almost from the start.

The objectives of the word-study program for primary children were outlined in Chapter VI. This program may be thought of as having three points of emphasis. A child must, first, understand the meaning of the words he is reading. This calls both for learning new vocabulary and for enriching the meanings of words already familiar. For the purposes of discussion in this chapter, this has been called the *word-meaning* aspect of word study activities. Second, in order to be able to read, the child must recognize the word in its printed form. For skilled, rapid reading he must be able to make this recognition instantly from the general configuration of the word, or from obvious structural elements. For discussion purposes, this has been called skill in *word recognition.* Third, the child must be able to break an unfamiliar word into whatever phonetic or structural elements he needs to work out its pronunciation. This, for the purposes of this chapter, has been called skill in *word analysis.* This is a term which is commonly used today instead of *phonetic analysis.* It encompasses those techniques formerly taught in programs stressing phonetics, but it includes additional skills, and the result is a much broader and more flexible attack on words.

While it is helpful to discuss the three aspects of the word-study program separately, they are closely interrelated in the actual teaching situation. When a teacher helps a child to recognize such words as *cow, farm, bus,* or *railroad station* in order to read a story, she also enriches the meanings of these words through the story itself, the pic-

tures, and the subsequent class discussion When a child studies a word in order to be able to recognize it again, he has made at least a partial analysis of it, even though he has done nothing more than to identify it as the word with the tail, ' ' the one with the tall letters," or the one that begins like my name Skillful word analysis, in turn, often depends upon the child s adeptness with configurational clues or upon his familiarity with the meaning of the word

As children become more skillful readers, the interrelationships among the three aspects of the word study program change, and with them the teaching emphases In the beginning, the child s reading vocabulary is well within his existing stock of word meanings He needs to be helped to recognize new words through configurational clues Teachers can expect to introduce many new words before the story is read and to repeat them in other contexts to assure that they will be remembered As the child learns to recognize more words he develops a vocabulary which he can use as a basis for identifying the sounds of common beginnings endings, and other word parts As rapidly as he develops techniques for attacking new words, the teaching emphasis should shift so that he is encouraged to use these techniques By the end of the third grade, the child who has made typical progress in word analysis skills should be able to unlock most easy words for himself He will, however still need help with the pronunciation of words containing new and difficult sound elements and with many personal names place names and technical terms He will also need reading experiences planned to help him meet these new terms frequently enough to become thoroughly familiar with them Then, too as he reads more widely he will encounter an increasing number of words with unfamiliar meanings Emphasis on enriching meanings and developing new concepts increases as children expand their reading horizons and continues to be a major concern in the intermediate and high school grades

This chapter discusses the development of word study activities for primary children first, in enriching word meanings second, in developing skill in word recognition and third, in developing skill in word analysis In Chapter XII, methods of expanding these activities to meet the needs of intermediate grade children are suggested. Since successful reading experiences in the early primary grades depend in part, on the way in which children are introduced to new words, suggestions of ways of handling the word recognition problems occasioned by story materials are also included in Chapters V and VII

ENRICHING WORD MEANINGS

The primary teacher needs to plan for three kinds of growth in helping children build new word meanings. First, they need to be helped to enrich concepts connected with familiar words. *Ride* may have meant to ride in the family car. Now a child learns that one can ride a scooter or a horse; that one rides in a wagon, in a boat, or in an airplane. A *farm* may have meant a few acres on the edge of town Now a child reads about a dairy farm, a wheat farm, a tobacco farm This sharpening and refining of vague or limited concepts continues well beyond the elementary school. The high school geometry student adds new meanings to terms like *circle, square,* and *triangle.* The adult puzzles over definitions of *democracy* or *faith.*

Second, new meanings are added to familiar words. *Dress* may have meant a girl's frock. Now the child learns to *dress* the doll, or to *dress* himself for recess. He may hear his mother planning to *dress* a chicken or his father getting out his *dress* suit. He may read about the unusual *dress* of children in another land. A *foot* may be something on which he puts his shoes, a measure of distance, or a special end of his bed. A dog can *bark* but there is also *bark* on a tree. These new meanings are not all developed at once. The teacher must sense when a word is in an unfamiliar setting and give help with it

Third, the child is exploring a greatly enriched and widened environment. As he does so, he encounters many new terms. He learns the names of new pieces of equipment in school. He visits the airport or the creamery in the nearby town. He begins to read textbooks in which a few of the special terms of the content fields start to appear. All these experiences make for an enriched stock of word meanings and for a much wider experience background from which to read.

The problem of enriching and expanding a child's word meanings extends far beyond the reading program. Every aspect of the primary program contributes. This section discusses ways of developing word meanings, first through the total primary program, second through group reading activities, and third through special practice devices.

Using the Total Primary Program to Enrich Word Meanings

Develop meanings from experience. Suggestions for widening children's experience background and for developing general facility

in language usage were included in Chapter IV. Firsthand experience is important if a child is to develop accurate concepts. As the children come back from a trip they talk about what they have seen. Here is an opportunity to develop new terms. The rabbit we saw is an *Angora* rabbit. He has long fuzzy fur like the soft fuzz on Janet's new sweater. His home is called a *hutch* or a *pen*. Other opportunities come as the children develop an experience record of their trip. Such records of new terms were illustrated in Chapter VIII.

Objects brought to school by the children, collections made during the year, exhibits loaned from museums, and other means of enriching the classroom environment also enrich word meanings. Jack's grandfather has been on a trip to Mexico. He brought Jack a *serape*. What is it? In the fall the children begin to bring interesting nuts and berries to school. They use one of the simpler nature books to look up their specimens and to label them correctly with the teacher's help. A science exhibit, entitled *Things That Float*, adds terms such as *cork*, *canoe*, *balloon*, *water-ball*, and *raft*. A recipe for jelly calls for terms needed for measuring and for names of ingredients. Such classroom experiences can be particularly helpful in vocabulary building because they offer many opportunities for the children to use the new terms.

Pictures can supplement firsthand experiences as means of developing new concepts. A trip to a farm may not answer all the children's questions. After they return they may study a set of pictures to secure further information. The farm we visited had a small barn; here is one that is large. Our farmer grew corn; here is a picture of a wheat field stretching as far as you can see. Here is a farm where dairy cattle are raised; there seems to be more pasture land. Bulletin-board displays can be developed around such topics as *Animals We Know*, *Signs of Winter*, *Things That Grow*. Even pictures drawn by children can be helpful in concept building. For example, the illustrations of an excursion can be checked for accuracy. Are the colors correct? Are relative sizes right? Have important details been left out?

Children help to enrich the vocabulary of their classmates as they report on special experiences. Roland takes a bus ride to his grandmother's and tells about the trip. Roy has slept in a Pullman, and tells how the porter made up the berth. Bob has been up in an airplane. Judy's family has some special equipment for raising chickens. Kenneth plants his own garden each spring. Several children have seen a new television program. All such activities that contribute to the

richness of the total program also contribute to children's stocks of word meanings.

Use wide reading to supplement firsthand experience. Primary children soon reach the point where their reading helps to enrich their stock of word meanings. After a trip to the post office the children can read in more detail about the machines and men they saw. As they begin to study about how people lived at the time of the first Thanksgiving, they find stories describing costumes, telling how the first houses were built, and illustrating the kind of furniture that was used. All the types of reading materials suggested in Chapter VII as important to the child's total reading experiences can play a part in enriching his stock of word meanings.

Encourage children to use new terms. Children need to be encouraged to make new terms their own by using them in their speech and writing. The composing of classroom records helps to serve this purpose. "That long thing they used to reach the windows." "Yes, but can anyone remember what they called it?" "It was a ladder." "Any special kind of a ladder?" "I think it was something like extension." "Does anyone know, for sure, what extension means?" Helping to label a collection; putting the right caption under a picture on the bulletin board; writing a note to a child who is ill and explaining so clearly that he will not have to guess what you mean by "the thing," "something round," "sort of dark"; and being given special credit for using a new word, all help to give a child reasons for putting his new words to use.

Using Group Reading Activities to Enrich Word Meanings

Plan for variety in the materials read. The activities of reading groups have a special contribution to make to enriched word meanings. Part of this contribution comes through the variety of stories in basal readers. Part comes from the many other kinds of materials used as centers of group activities in reading.

Care needs to be taken to assure that a plan to use varied reading materials to increase children's stocks of word meanings does not result in presenting new terms so rapidly that they are floored by many words they can neither recognize in printed form nor understand. In fact, in the very beginning the problem of selecting material is not one of adding new meanings, but of making sure that meanings are familiar so that children face no problems other than those of learning to recognize the words in printed form. More skilled readers can

branch into new areas without facing an overwhelming word-recognition problem if the general style of the new materials is simple and the proportion of new words to familiar ones is light. It helps to read in sequence several stories using the same concepts. It is also possible to increase the child's total contacts with new concepts by using the new terms in experience records at the same time as they are being read in books—Thanksgiving plans may be developed in class, or group Thanksgiving stories composed, while Thanksgiving stories are read; a list of means of transportation can be prepared as a class project while groups read stories about transportation. When such precautions are taken, the child's experiences in reading groups should be expected to add steadily to his stock of word meanings.

Use word-recognition techniques that stress meanings. Methods used to help children become acquainted with the configurations of new words need to make meanings clear at the same time. Several techniques for doing this were suggested in Chapter VII. New words can be presented on the chalkboard in one- or two-sentence stories that highlight their meanings. They may be listed on the board, and the pictures or the title of the story used to develop their meanings. "What do you call that part of a train?" "Yes, it's the *engine*. That's what our story is about. I'll write *engine* up here where you can see it. It will be one of our new words." Sometimes new words can be introduced in an experience record. Such presentations in context help to assure that the child is thinking about the meaning as well as the configuration of the word.

When children begin to use word-analysis clues to work out words in context, teachers typically check to be sure the meaning is clear. 'Read it again now. Does it fit?" "What would it mean if it said he was *clumsy*?" 'If her dress was *ragged*, how would she look?' Sometimes the words that cause trouble are written on the board and checked again, both for meaning and for pronunciation, at the end of the reading period. Such checks do not necessarily take much time, but they help to make certain that children understand the words they have been reading.

Review activities, planned to strengthen word recognition, can also help to develop meanings. Some of these will be simple games with flash cards, but many others will call for the child to use the word in context—to choose the correct word in a multiple-choice exercise, to mark a sentence true or false, to solve a riddle, to make a sensible rhyme, or to match a list of words with the correct pictures.

Point group discussion toward clear meanings. Emphasis on thoughtful reading contributes directly to enriched word meanings. Whenever the meaning of the story hinges on the interpretation of a word or a phrase, there is an opportunity to develop clearer concepts. "What word tells you how Jane felt?" "There's a word that tells you how big it was. Who can find it?" "That was one of our new words. Can anyone remember what it meant?" It is also possible to use the discussion of the pictures accompanying the story and children's comments from their own experiences to enrich word meanings. Children read about a squirrel gathering nuts for the winter, and look at the picture to see how he does it. Those who have squirrels in their trees add their firsthand information. Such emphasis on word meanings does not interrupt the discussion of the story. It comes in naturally as the meaning of the story unfolds.

Plan for follow-up activities that enrich word meanings. In Chapter VII it was suggested that many of the activities following the first reading of a story be planned to encourage wider reading, or to call for thoughtful rereading of the story. This type of follow-up can make a contribution to clearer word meanings. Locating more information about turtles to answer the questions raised by a story in the basal text will help to add new concepts in the natural-science field. Drawing a picture to illustrate a story calls for accurate concepts. Dramatization calls for thought about how a princess or a wicked giant would behave, and for careful consideration of just how the stage setting should look. During follow-up activities such as these the teacher often has time to talk to individual children, to work with a small group whose concepts do not seem to be clear, and to help children relate what they have read to their own experiences. In the process, critical evaluation, thoughtful understanding, and enriched word meanings move forward hand in hand.

Providing Special Practice and Review Activities Centered Around Word Meanings

Plan practice activities that develop interest in new words. The most important teaching of word meanings goes on during regular classroom activities. However, it is possible to use special activities to keep children alert to new meanings and interested in learning to use new words. It is also helpful, from time to time, to use work-type activities for review purposes.

Much of the success of techniques designed to develop interest in

word meanings depends on the teacher's enthusiasm and her alertness to new terms. For the most part the process is an informal one of intriguing children with the new word when the appropriate occasion arises. "There is a special word we use for that. It is a long one; I wonder if we could learn to use it. We say the string *vibrates.*" "Would you like to use that word in our story? Watch while I write it for you." "Bill just said that the water *condensed* on the window. That is a big word, and he used it correctly. I wonder how many of you know exactly what he means?"

Practice activities to review new meanings need to be interesting for children, and whenever possible they should present a challenge to try to use new terms correctly. Often a practice exercise can be built around a group of words from a common source—a review to see how many names of animals at the Zoo we still remember, or to see how many of us still know the different kinds of cars on a passenger train. Second- and third-graders, who are acquiring more skill, not only in reading but in writing and spelling will be able to do written exercises. First-graders are likely to be more successful when they can engage in informal oral work. Among types of special activities that may help to develop interest in new words are the following:

Children's interest and attention can be called to new words by: Pointing out when a child has used an unusual word; taking special time to comment on an unusual word in a story being read to children; making a special point of writing a new term on the chalkboard; giving special credit to the children who begin to use a new word; making a special point of reminding children that they might like to use a new word in their reports or creative writing, and putting it on the board for them to spell; making a point to identify a word as "our new word" or "the big word we learned yesterday"; discussing an excursion to develop new word meanings.

Special practice in using new words can be provided in: Drawing pictures to illustrate new terms; matching a group of words with the correct pictures; sorting a set of pictures according to some special classification—things that are animal, vegetable, mineral, things that belong in the country or in the city; writing riddles about new words; answering riddles written by others in the class; illustrating the new terms on an experience record; making a simple class picture dictionary; seeing who can put all the labels in an exhibit back correctly; answering a series of questions about a short paragraph by choosing the correct word.

Plan special devices to keep new words in sight. The child's word-meaning vocabulary will increase more rapidly than his ability to

recognize the words in his reading, and much more rapidly than his ability to spell them for his written work. Some of the new words will not be used frequently enough in reading and writing activities beyond the immediate experience in which they were learned to make it worth while to spend much time studying them. Others will be important to learn both to read and to spell. However, it is not always possible to help children develop immediate ability to read and to spell independently all the new words they could well add to their word-meaning vocabularies in the course of an activity. This is particularly true for first-graders whose oral ability to express themselves is well beyond their reading level and their writing skill. New words need to be kept before children so that they may refer to them for spelling purposes and develop gradual familiarity with their configurations.

A successful device for keeping important words before children is a class word list. This may take the form of an experience record listing the new terms learned in a unit, a series of spelling lists of words the children use frequently, or a set of word cards developed in flash-card form. In one class a study of transportation resulted in a series of charts titled, *We Travel by Air, We Travel by Land, We Travel by Sea.* Children added pictures and names of new vehicles as they studied them. One bulletin board in a second grade was labelled, *Help Yourself to a Word.* On it were pinned envelopes for each letter in the alphabet, and in each envelope were flash cards of words which the child could take to his seat to help him spell. For the children in a first grade, writing letters to Santa Claus, the teacher prepared a series of individual word cards with pictures of toys and other Christmas items pasted above the word. These were propped around the chalkboard ledge As the children needed a special word they located the appropriate picture and carefully copied the word underneath.

Opportunities to post lists of words arise when. Children need special words to help with spelling, committees in a social studies unit decide to report on special places, names of equipment, or processes that are new to the class; children take an excursion and return to list all the new things they have seen; children begin to write creative stories or poetry and begin to talk about good words to help tell about a rainy day, a snow storm, children start on a science project when it is important to classify objects.

Provide special activities to give initial contacts with the dictionary. Extensive dictionary work belongs in the intermediate

grades when children have developed more mature reading and spelling techniques. What is important at the primary level is not the development of skilled use of the dictionary but interest in it and some understanding of what help it can give. Picture dictionaries are useful for this purpose. Occasionally spelling or other textbooks have helpful simple glossaries. Beginners will not do much independent work, but they can examine picture dictionaries, and they may watch while the teacher locates a word, may discuss its accompanying picture, and perhaps try to read the definition or the accompanying illustrative sentence. By third grade, many children should be able to use simple techniques of alphabetical order to locate words independently. They may be given some direct practice in this, and they may also be given experiences with lists of special terms connected with a unit or lists of words needed for spelling purposes that have been alphabetized, at least according to beginning letters. These and other dictionary activities in the primary grades are largely informal. Special experiences such as the following may be helpful:

Simple experiences with alphabetical order can be given through: Finding a needed letter on classroom alphabet cards; using a simple alphabetical filing system to locate a word card needed to help with spelling; helping to develop lists of spelling words classified alphabetically—words we use beginning with *a*, *b*, *c*; examining alphabet books; finding a word in a picture dictionary; finding a topic in the index to a textbook; playing games in which one is to tell what letter comes before or after a given letter; telling in which part of the dictionary one would expect to find a given word.

Contacts with a dictionary can be provided through: Having opportunities to examine picture dictionaries; helping the teacher look up a word in a picture dictionary; looking at a picture in a dictionary to help with the meaning of a word; making a simple picture dictionary for a special group of important words; making a class alphabet book; finding a word in the glossary of a spelling book.

DEVELOPING SKILL IN WORD RECOGNITION

It is one thing to know the meaning of the word *cat*, and to be able to identify the picture of a cat or to describe one. It is another to know that the symbol *cat* says cat. In the beginning, a child's word-recognition techniques depend largely on clues from the general shape of the word. The youngster who can recognize *cat* in a story may do so by its configuration without being able to spell it, or to tell that it begins with the sound of *c* and ends in the sound of *at*. He may even be able to recognize the word as a whole without being

able to name any of the individual letters. Adults use configurational clues more than they sometimes realize. It is possible to recognize *Tchaikovsky* without giving a phonetic translation of each syllable. It is also possible to read it silently with accurate meaning without being absolutely certain of how to say it aloud. Few teachers will have any trouble reading the sentence *T ch g r d g s a c pl x pr c ss,* although no phonetic analysis can be made from the letters given. Adults could also learn to recognize */Σ as a code symbol for *mother* without being able to name any of the separate symbols or to give any phonetic equivalents for them. Children begin the process of learning to read by responding to configurational cues. A first step in helping them develop word-recognition skills is to help them build a stock of words they can recognize at sight.

As a second step in developing skill in word recognition, children need to be helped to refine their techniques for identifying words. They need to learn to use elements that help in more accurate discriminations. *Bobby* learns to tell his name from *Billy* by looking for the two *b's* in the middle. The children learn to tell *ball* from *balls* by the general shape of the words and the *s* on the plural form. They use the context to decide between *was* and *saw.* They discover that they can tell *mouse* and *house* apart because *mouse* begins like *mother.* At first such discriminations may even be made without accurate knowledge of the names of the letters, but frequently used letters soon are known.

Third, children need to be helped to develop word recognition skills that serve as the foundation for word analysis. They discover that several words begin with *th,* and listen to hear how they sound. They see that the rhyming words in a poem end in the same letters. They talk about how nearly alike two words sound and study the way they are written to see where the difference lies. They see the root word in *comes.* At first, these will only be partial clues. A child may know that *mother* begins like *month,* and may be able to give the beginning sound without knowing how to pronounce *ther,* or even being sure of the sound of *m* when it is not combined with *o.* In time, if children are helped to take an active interest in the shapes and sounds of words, they will become able to make an exact analysis of an unfamiliar word.

Much of the direct guidance given to the primary child in developing word-recognition techniques comes during his work in a reading group. Because this is the case, suggestions for introducing new words

were included in Chapter VII in the discussion of how to assure a successful first reading of a story. The general plan for word-recognition experiences proposed in that chapter was as follows: First, the materials to be read are selected so that the number of new words introduced at any one time is adjusted to the child's reading skill; second, new words are introduced before the story is read if it seems likely that the children will have trouble figuring them out from picture, context, or word-analysis clues; third, children are encouraged to use all available clues to recognize new words for themselves if they seem apt to be successful in so doing; fourth, the teacher adjusts to differences in word-recognition skills by helping individuals as they read silently; and last, follow-up activities connected with the story are planned so that they provide a certain amount of review of the new words.

In addition to the help given in reading groups, children have many stimulations to learn new words from the wealth of supplementary materials surrounding them in the typical classroom. This section discusses the development of word-recognition skills, first, through group reading activities; second, through on-going classroom experiences; and, third, through special practice and review activities.

Developing Word-Recognition Skills through Group Reading Activities

Make sure that meanings are clear. One of the basic principles underlying all methods of helping a child learn to recognize new words is to make sure that he knows their meanings. Suggestions of ways in which word-recognition techniques can also contribute to word meanings were included in the preceding section. Sometimes children can be encouraged to use context and pictures to figure out the meanings for themselves. Sometimes words are introduced in a discussion setting that focusses on their meanings. There may be other occasions when the children are introduced to new words in exercises that present them in picture-dictionary form. If the concepts in the new material seem likely to be very difficult, teachers may even plan for special excursions or for other concrete experiences before a set of stories is read. Whatever the specific method, developing ability to recognize a word and making sure that the child knows its meaning go hand in hand.

Present new words so that they can be clearly seen. Wherever a child meets a new word for the first time, he needs to get a clear

picture of the way it looks. When new words are being studied previous to reading a story, one simple system is to write them, one at a time, on the chalkboard as they are discussed, leaving enough space between them that each can be seen clearly, or erasing one word before a second is presented. If the words have been presented in short one- or two-sentence stories on the board, they are often underlined, or written again at the side of the story. Flash cards are another useful way of presenting new words. As the children discuss the word, the teacher can hold up the card, or place it in a card holder. When a second word is discussed the first can be taken down, or placed aside in a separate section of the holder. The picture-dictionary arrangement for presenting new words used in some workbooks is another way to make them stand out clearly.

If a child asks for help with a word he has met in context, it does not interrupt his reading seriously if time is taken to write it on the board or on a pad kept handy by the teacher for such purposes. This lifts it out of its setting and gives the child a better look. In addition, the system of jotting down words causing trouble is a convenient way of collecting a list for later review activities. A child can also be helped to get a clear look at a word by putting his fingers around it, or by boxing it off with his hands if it is written in an experience record. Sometimes the word occurs in a sentence or phrase where it stands out because it is the only new word in the group and children can be asked to watch for it as they read. None of these devices should distract children for long from the meaning of the story.

Discussing the appearance of a word also helps children to see it clearly. As the teacher writes it on the board she may comment on its length, on beginning letters that are already familiar to the children, on striking characteristics such as tall letters, on plurals of words for which the singular form is already known, or on similarities to familiar words. Children, too, will point out distinctions. "This one looks like *ball,* but this has an *e* in the middle." "It ends like *tell.*" "And it's like *sell,* too." Such discoveries point the way to independent word analysis a little later on.

Often it is helpful to use several methods of presenting a word. As the teacher first mentions the word she may write it on the board. Later she may ask the children to match a set of flash cards with the words on the chalkboard. Then, as they discuss the story, she may ask who can find the new word. If they have difficulty recognizing it in the story she may ask them to look again at the words on the board.

Helping children meet the same configuration in slightly different settings and printing styles often serves to make the impression more lasting.

Develop active interest in learning new words. Devices that help to call a child's attention to a new word also should help to keep him actively interested in remembering it. No single method for studying new words should be adopted and carried out in the same way every day. To do so is to risk turning what should be a live, challenging activity into an uninteresting, relatively meaningless drill.

If word recognition activities are planned in relation to the stories in which the words are met, there is less likelihood that they will become routine. No two stories will make the same demands on the reader nor will they provide the same kind of help through pictures and context. Each new day's work with words will therefore have a slightly different emphasis. On some days the challenge will be, "Let's see if you can read this story without help. I think you can figure out the new words when you come to them. Would you like to try?" At other times, reading the story will be the culmination of several days spent in introducing new words through discussion, observation, or experience records. Chalkboard work and flash cards can be used interchangeably. If two new words in the story are quite similar, activities may focus on how to tell them apart. Sometimes children themselves will suggest activities. 'May I read the list?" 'I can find it somewhere else in the room." Such variety helps to make the activities centered around learning words as exciting as any other aspect of the reading program.

Throughout the reading of a story and the discussion that follows there are other opportunities to interest children in new words. An observer listening to a group at work will hear such comments as, "That was one of our new words." "That one is up here in our list of new words. Now do you remember it?' "That was one of the words we studied yesterday; can anyone remember what it said?" After the story has been discussed, it is appropriate occasionally to go back to read the lines containing the new words, especially if they are key words in the story, or to discuss the part of the story in which the new words appeared. Care needs to be taken to assure that such activities, too, do not become routine or take up an unduly heavy proportion of the time set aside for the purpose of discussing the story. Having fun with reading is more than learning to name new words.

At times, introducing a game element is a helpful device in maintaining interest in new words. This type of activity may come at the close of the discussion of a story. Children may take turns pronouncing the new words as they are held up on flash cards and each child be allowed to keep the card if he can say the word. At the end, each counts the number of cards he holds. Children can be allowed to erase the new words from the board one at a time, each child choosing the one he wishes to erase. A little adroitly applied praise will make it important to erase the hardest word first, or to show that you now know the one that caused you so much trouble. A child can be given a turn as "teacher" and point to the new words in random order for another child. If the second child can pronounce them all, it is his turn to point. New words may be written in "picture books," each book being a folded paper containing the word on the outside and the word and the picture on the inside. Children may work with these books singly or in pairs, trying to read the word on the front, and then checking to see if they are correct. After an Easter story, one teacher drew an Easter Rabbit with an open mouth. If a child could pronounce the word on a flash card correctly he was allowed to feed the rabbit by pushing the card into a pocket back of its mouth.

Game-like activities with new words serve their purpose best when they stimulate group interest in a quick review. Such devices should be looked at with caution if they call for a heavy time expenditure in activities unrelated to reading in proportion to the amount of time spent actually reviewing words—deciding who should have the next turn, moving forward in line, drawing elaborate pictures, or writing names. In the end, nothing is going to make for progress in learning to recognize new words in context more effectively than enjoying quantities of easy, interesting story materials.

Expect occasional errors. Words will sometimes need to be repeated many times over before children are sure of them. Even the position of a word on the page may be a word-recognition clue in the beginning. Capital and lower-case letters will change the appearance of a word much more drastically for a child than they will for an adult. Sometimes a word that is recognized in flash-card form will not be known when it appears in print. All of these represent problems of learning to respond accurately to the general configuration of a word.

As children become more skillful, errors occasioned by slight shifts in the position of a word will not be as frequent, but problems with the general configuration of the word will continue. If there are two long words in one lesson, they may be confused for a time. Words such as *was* and *saw,* or *on* and *no* often cause trouble. Children may also make errors in mistaking words with similar beginnings or endings.

Some errors may be caused by the rapidity with which the new words are presented, or by the associations the child makes with them. Learning new words is somewhat like learning the names of strangers at an afternoon tea. If one can chat with them one or two at a time, the names may stick. If fifteen people in a room are introduced one after the other, the chance of confusion is much greater. Similarly, the child who meets too many words on one day may not recognize any of them on the next presentation. Sometimes related words, such as a series having to do with travel, may be confused. Sometimes a child will give a synonym for a word. He may call *Father, Daddy;* or *ride, car;* or *cat, pussy.*

Working with words in context is a valuable aid in reducing errors occasioned by the configuration of a word. If a child's word-study activities are planned so that he spends most of his time guessing words from flash cards, working with lists of words on the chalkboard, and playing games with isolated words, he has less opportunity to learn to check, for himself, if he is right or wrong. If he reads the word in a story, or chooses the word that answers a question based on a short paragraph, he learns to ask whether the word he has chosen makes sense in his reading. On the other hand, errors occasioned by giving synonyms that make good sense in the story call for activities where the child has to think carefully about the configuration of the words.

Developing Word-Recognition Skills through On-going Classroom Activities

Use classroom experiences to add to the child's word-recognition vocabulary. The opportunities in the typical primary classroom to increase a child's word-recognition vocabulary have already been outlined. He works with experience records; he uses signs and labels; he refers to class plans; he reads captions to pictures; he follows directions for using classroom equipment; he ventures on his own

into recreational reading; and he begins to work with simple textbook materials in the content fields. Each of these experiences plays a part in helping the child learn new words.

Teaching techniques focussed on word recognition during ongoing classroom activities will vary with the activity and with the child's reading skill. At the beginning-reading level, the teacher may work with classroom records on a prereading basis—reading the new words for the children, drawing occasional attention to their configurations, and encouraging the youngsters who show the most mature word-recognition ability to try out their skill. As children become better able to handle independent techniques of word analysis, classroom reading experiences offer opportunities to encourage them to learn new words by working them out for themselves.

Certain words that are needed regularly may be taught and reviewed in the same way as are those needed for reading-group activities. This will become a particularly important aspect of word-recognition activities as children begin to read simple informational materials as background for unit activities. Methods of scheduling and grouping so that a certain amount of group activity in reading can be centered around informational reading are suggested in Chapter VI.

Find ways of keeping new words used in classroom activities clearly before the child. Techniques that keep words with new meanings before the child also help him add them to the stock of words he can recognize at sight. Among the methods suggested earlier are: using the word in an experience record; preparing class lists of new terms learned during a special project, listing needed spelling words so that children can use them independently; developing picture dictionaries. Any device that helps a child become actively interested in a new word, and that keeps it before him so that he is encouraged to reread it helps to add to his word recognition vocabulary.

Providing Special Practice and Review Activities in Word Recognition

Provide reviews through opportunities for wide reading. No matter how striking a first presentation of a word may be, most children will need to meet it several times in different settings before they are sure of it. Some of the most effective review activities are those that present the new word again in interesting stories. Work-

type practice can be reduced in proportion to the amount of easy, interesting reading with which the child can be supplied.

The list that follows summarizes means of providing additional word-recognition experiences through wide reading of materials using similar vocabulary. These have been discussed in detail in preceding chapters. Variations of these suggestions can be worked out in many ways.

Repetition of words in varied story settings can be secured by: Gearing reading activities to a classroom project requiring experience records and informational reading on the same topic; using stories on the same general topic from other basal reader series as supplementary reading; placing a book on the library table after it is no longer needed for group activities, using easy basal readers for recreational reading purposes—putting selected first grade materials on the library table in grades two and three, making preprimers available after children have progressed to primer and first reader materials; having children reread simplified mimeographed versions of their own creative stories in order to illustrate them; having children reread a story to write riddles, to plan dramatizations, to draw pictures of favorite passages, preparing to read a favorite story aloud to another reading group.

Plan special practice activities that call for thoughtful reading. Some children will need little more repetition of new words than that provided through wide reading. Others will need considerable additional help. This is the place where review activities using short paragraphs, riddles, and other work-type materials can be useful. Typically, the more skills in independent word analysis children possess, the less they are going to need such review experiences. First-graders, and immature groups in second and third grades are likely to benefit the most from this type of help.

While there is a place in word-recognition practice activities for drills using flash cards, for lists on the board, or for games, a major share of the review exercises should be planned to help the child use the new words in context, so that thoughtful reading is encouraged. Variety in review activities is also important. Just as children grow weary of the same method of introducing words if it is used routinely day after day, so they tire if the same type of exercise is used automatically to conclude each lesson.

Some review activities can be developed by encouraging children to re-use new words in short creative-language experiences. Beginners can have fun arranging sets of word cards to reconstruct a short ex-

perience record or to write sentences of their own. Sometimes these cards are the large ones used for group activities, sometimes small ones for each individual child. A little later children may dictate or write short stories about the characters in their reading. These can be hectographed and given back for rereading or for illustrating. Children also enjoy making up riddles about new words. Such activities have the value of encouraging creative expression while they provide the additional contacts with new words needed for reading purposes.

Activities with pictures can be used in a variety of ways to provide thought-provoking reviews. These may be particularly useful with beginners who have limited ability to write. Words may be matched with pictures; children may be asked to draw pictures to illustrate given words or sentences, they may illustrate part of the story they enjoy and then dictate captions to their pictures; they may illustrate sentences containing new words hectographed by the teacher in such a way that the completed page folds into a little booklet. Activities with pictures can be greatly overdone, however, if they are used routinely as busy work to keep children occupied while other reading groups are at work. Some caution also has to be used with picture activities in which the child is asked to spend a heavy amount of time in cutting or pasting in order to place a set of words under their appropriate pictures. Like other practice activities in word recognition, experiences with pictures need to be appraised in terms of the amount of actual experience in thoughtful reading they provide.

Various types of multiple-choice, true-false, and completion exercises can be useful for word recognition purposes. Children may be asked to choose the correct sentence from such pairs as:

The tree was green.
The tree was brown

This same question could be set up as:

The tree was (green, brown)

A form that demands very little writing and therefore is useful for beginners sets up a series of statements for which the child encircles *yes* or *no*:

The tree was brown Yes No

A more complicated form might ask the child to fill in the correct words for several sentences:

The children went to the ————.
They wanted to see the - - ————.
The man who made them laugh was a ————- -.

Circus, clown, elephant.

Riddles are often particularly interesting:

I belong in the circus.
I am tall.
I am big.
I have a long trunk.
What am I?

Clown, elephant, parade.

A certain number of exercises of the type just described can be developed around a story that the children have read. When this is the case, they can be given some additional helpful review experience if they are encouraged to reread the story in order to locate the correct answer. However, it will sometimes take the edge off the enjoyment of a story to go back over it to answer specific review questions. Similar activities can be developed by writing short paragraphs using the new words and then asking the child to answer questions similar to those that have just been illustrated. This type of exercise reviews the word in a new context setting and reviews it again in the question.

Practice activities for word recognition purposes can be planned so that they contribute to increased skill in word analysis. The degree and the kind of discrimination required can be varied by the choice of the key words to which the child responds. For example, choosing between *ball* and *door* calls for general configuration clues only. Choosing between *ball* and *bill* calls for ability to note middle letters, whereas *ball* and *bat* require a careful look at endings, and *ball* and *call* stress beginning letters. The more skillful children become in word recognition, the more important it is to plan their activities so that they employ word-analysis techniques to make their discriminations.

The workbooks accompanying basal-reading series offer a variety of ingenious word-recognition activities. Some workbook activities are planned to follow the story in the basal reader. These are helpful

when a specific review of the story seems desirable. Offering more flexible possibilities for exercises are the workbooks that are more nearly self-contained. These typically present the new words in picture-dictionary or story form and then provide a series of short paragraphs and questions that call for the child to use the new words in various settings. Materials arranged in this way also provide a certain amount of fresh and interesting reading, even though the paragraphs are very short.

When a single basal reader is being followed systematically, the appropriate workbook is the one that accompanies the series. When a classroom is supplied with several basal-reader series, teachers sometimes find it helpful to get sets of eight or ten workbooks, from which they select appropriate exercises. Expense in replacing such materials is often saved by having the children write their answers on a separate piece of paper, rather than writing in the workbook. As with other types of workbook exercises, word-recognition activities serve their purpose best when they are selected in terms of the needs of the group. A workbook will rarely make its most appropriate contribution to the reading program when it is followed, page by page, by all children.

Types of practice activities that illustrate the suggestions that have been made in this section are the following

Creative-language experiences with new words might include. Making up riddles, sharing riddles with other children, writing sentences or stories with flash cards, drawing a picture of a character in a story and suggesting an appropriate caption, helping to construct a group story using the new words, dictating stories about topics related to reading activities, to be reread and illustrated when they are mimeographed.

Activities using words and pictures can call for. Drawing lines from words to appropriate pictures, choosing which of two sentences correctly describes a picture, choosing which of two words is the correct caption for a picture, making a four-page picture book by drawing the pictures suggested by mimeographed instructions, drawing pictures of key people, animals, or objects in a story in response to instructions printed on the chalkboard; illustrating blank pages in a mimeographed version of a child's creative story, making single word picture books for the library table; placing a set of flash cards under the appropriate pictures in a series mimeographed by the teacher.

Activities using words in context can call for: Choosing which of two sentences based on a story is correct; marking a series of statements using the new words *yes* or *no,* or *true* or *false,* choosing the correct words to answer a question based on the story; choosing the correct word to

answer a question based on a short paragraph supplied as part of the work-type exercise; choosing the correct answers to a series of riddles based on the story; choosing the correct answers to a series of riddles based on a classroom experience.

Use games with caution. Possibilities for using games and other activities in which words are used out of context were discussed earlier in this section in relation to reading-group activities with words. These devices also have a place as occasional work-type experiences. Sometimes they can be particularly useful for free-time activities. Placed on a table where they are readily available, they can be turned to for a few minutes' relaxation by a single child or by a group of children. They enjoy helping each other, matching scores, and securing evidence of their own progress.

Teachers sometimes develop three or four simple games, help children to master a few rules for playing them, and then supply new forms as new sets of words are added to children's vocabulary. A fishing game, for example, has many possibilities. A cardboard box, a series of word cards with paper clips attached, and dime-store magnets hung on small fishing poles are all that are needed. Children dip their poles into the box, and then read the card they pick up. If they can pronounce it correctly they may keep the card. Variations of this game might include fishing for words having to do with Christmas, for animals in the Zoo, or for names of toys. As word analysis skills develop, children may fish for words beginning with a specific sound, ending with a stated sound, or containing a given syllable. Some teachers who are mechanically inclined have even wired a cardboard frame so that when a child joins a wire correctly from a word to its matching picture a small light flashes on. Needless to say, such an elaborate device needs to be built so that many sets of new words can be used as stimuli, and care needs to be taken that the child's mechanical interest in the device does not outweigh his interest in reading. Durrell[2] has suggested ways of using two cardboard circles with slits cut in various positions. These word wheels can be planned, for example, so that the inner circle, on top, contains a given beginning letter. Next to it a slit is cut, through which endings on the circle below appear as the circle is turned. Thus the child reads *b-all, b-ell, b-at, b-ank.* Among the most varied

2 Donald D. Durrell, *Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities,* pp. 220–230. Yonkers-on Hudson. The World Book Company, 1940

commercially-prepared word cards and games are those developed by Dolch.[3] In some classrooms it may be a saving of time to supplement teacher-made materials with a certain number of such commercial devices.

All activities with isolated words need to be used with caution. Children easily may turn to random guessing if they are not supervised. They also may become so intrigued with the game element that the amount of actual reading they do is rather slight. Care also needs to be taken that the teacher does not spend long hours constructing a device that serves the children for only a few minutes. The best practice devices are those simple for the teacher to prepare and flexible enough so that children get many hours of use from them.

Word games can be developed through. Playing with packs of cards with the word on one side and the picture clue on the other, fishing for words; using various devices to match words and pictures, seeing who can read all the way around a word wheel, taking part in various group activities using flash cards

DEVELOPING SKILL IN WORD ANALYSIS

The first time a child tells two words apart by noting differences in the letters of which they are composed he has taken a step toward eventual independence in word analysis The time lapse between this first step and the point at which a child can pronounce for himself all the new words he meets is a matter of years. In this period he has several complicated skills to learn.

First, the child must become able to break the word he is studying into elements that are effective for pronunciation purposes. This may involve seeing structural elements such as roots, prefixes, suffixes, syllables, or the words making up a compound word; it may call for responding to single letters or other sound elements, or it may require a combination of any of the above, depending on the particular word.

Second, the child must be able to give a reasonable sound equivalent for whatever parts of the word he sees. This is more complicated than merely knowing the sounds of the individual letters. He may need to respond to whole words as he reads *school-room*; to syllables as he reads *com-ing*; to phonograms as he reads m*ake* or c*ake*; to individual letters as he distinguishes between *h*ouse and *m*ouse;

[3] Edward W Dolch materials published by the Garrard Press Champaign Illinois

to digraphs as he reads bla*ck* or *ch*ild; to blends as he reads *bl*ue and ho*ld*, to different sounds for the same letter combinations as he meets gr*ea*t, br*ea*d, and m*ea*n, to prefixes, roots, and suffixes as he reads *walk-ed*, or *in-side*. And he is likely to meet any combination of these sound elements in a given word.

Third, the reader must be able to blend the sounds of the parts of the word he sees into a recognizable whole. Children who can give the sound equivalents for separate word parts cannot always take this step Thus, *spring* may sound like *spurring*, or *first* like *forest*. Later, as two and three syllable words make their appearance, the reader also has to recognize where to place the accent and how to blend the syllables

Fourth, to be skilled in word analysis, the child must be able to vary his approach from word to word. *Chin* may be analyzed conveniently as *ch in*, but the sound element *in* is of no help in *shine*, or *again* The child who sees the small word *his* in *this*, or *car* in *scare* is in trouble. Versatility of attack is important The skilled analyzer of words knows the sound elements most likely to yield the correct pronunciation. He has had enough experience with syllables to sense where the syllabic division usually falls, he is accustomed to treating combinations such as *th, sh, ch* as units and to dealing with letters such as the silent *e* as part of larger sound elements, and he can use the sounds of single letters when he needs them Most important, he is able to shift his attack if his first attempt does not seem to work

Fifth, the skillful reader must be able to perform the entire complex task of analyzing an unfamiliar word as he meets it in context, checking on the accuracy of his identification through the sense of the passage and capitalizing on whatever short cuts the context setting has to offer

Finally, the child must develop the attitudes and skills requisite to effective use of the dictionary. These have only their beginnings at the primary level

Word analysis skills are not likely to develop harmoniously without planned guidance. A child who can recite word families or who can give the sounds of the letters of the alphabet without hesitation may not be able to see these elements when they are embedded in a larger word. Even if he can see them and can give the sounds for separate elements, he may not be able to blend them correctly The problem is complicated still more by the fact that the ultimate goal

is to help the child become able to use all these techniques together, flexibly, in a context setting. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide for smooth, all-round development.

Word analysis is a complex intellectual skill requiring both analysis and synthesis. Some children will see quickly the general principles involved and make their own independent discoveries well ahead of much help from the teacher. Others will find the task baffling and will need to be given patient, slow, and systematic guidance. Ideally, a child should come to the increased vocabulary load of the intermediate grades relatively competent to handle common words independently. Even so, these more difficult materials will pose additional word-analysis problems. At every grade level teachers are going to have to gear their teaching of word analysis techniques to the maturity and present insights of the child.

In laying the foundation for word-analysis skills, primary teachers face several problems to which this section is addressed. First, how does one go about the job of helping children discover the sounds of parts of words? Second, how does one decide which sounds to stress? Third, how can group reading activities be planned to foster word-analysis skills? Fourth, what help can be given through on-going classroom activities? Finally, what kinds of special practice activities are appropriate?

Helping the Child Discover the Sounds of Parts of a Word

Start with familiar words. How does a teacher help a child learn to attach a sound to a given letter combination? How does a child learn to see combinations of letters in a word? The starting-point is a known word in which there is a familiar element or, more often, several known words containing a common element. The child meets *hat* in his primer story and exclaims, "The last part of that word says *at*." The words *We* and *Will* begin subsequent lines of an experience story, and the child says, "Those two words start like my name." He has trouble with *call* in his reading and his teacher says, "You know how that begins. It has the same sound at the beginning as *come* and *cat*." As she does so, she writes the two words under each other so that he may see the common element clearly. From studying words he knows, the child is helped to discover elements he can both see and hear.

The word-analysis process actually begins at the prereading level. Long before a child can recognize many of the words around the

classroom he begins to note general similarities and differences. "My name begins like Sally's," "Those two lines begin exactly the same way," "I can spell my name," "Jane has the initial of her name on her handkerchief." These are all indications that children are beginning to respond to elements within words. Unless this capacity is present to some extent, the word recognition techniques that are the basis for beginning reading cannot operate. Learning to analyze words is a matter of refining these techniques, learning to see the parts of a word in left to right sequence, and becoming able to give the needed sounds for each part.

When he begins to read, some of the child's first discoveries are likely to be of a structural nature.[4] That is, he sees elements related to the structure of the word—meaning elements such as a root and suffix or the two words in a compound word, or pronunciation elements such as syllables. In his preprimer he learns the word *ride*. A few days later his story contains the word *rides*. The teacher may tell him what the new word is, she may cover the *s* and ask if anyone knows the word, or she may ask the child if it looks like a word he knows. Later, in an experience record, the children use *want* and *wants*. They may take time to talk a little about what *s* does on the end of a word. Perhaps then teacher writes *ride* and *rides*, and *want* and *wants*, under each other on the chalkboard so that the likeness and difference can easily be seen. Now the children are beginning to be able to use the *s* at the end of a word. Other opportunities to use structural elements also appear. In their experience record of a trip to the fire station the children use *fire, fireman, firehouse*. In another record they use *son* and *something*. These large word parts that are actually themselves familiar words offer excellent opportunities to help children take their first steps toward word analysis.

In the first grade the process of comparing known words soon extends to other sound elements. Initial sounds are a help early. The children use *like* and *laugh* and *took* and note that these all begin with *l*. The teacher may encourage them to say the words and to listen for the beginning sound. They may then try to name some words that begin with the same sound and watch as the teacher writes *late, letter,* and *last* on the board. In the course of reading a story, someone reads *his* for *this*. Since he knows the *s* ending from his

[4] For a detailed statement on the differences between structural and phonetic analysis see William S. Gray, *On Their Own in Reading*, pp. 75–105. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1948.

acquaintance with the small word *is,* the teacher takes the opportunity to help him become acquainted with the *th* beginning. She says, "Let's take another look at that one. It might be *his,* but it is a different word. It begins like *them* and *that* and *there.*" As she does so, she writes the words on the board. "Let's say them." "How do they begin?" "Now let's try *this.* What does it say?" This is an approach through phonetic analysis. That is, the child sees sound elements within the word—beginning letters, phonograms, consonant blends.

In second grade children discover more of the common endings. Their group poem contains the words *ring* and *sing* and they look for the letters that make the rhyme. Then the teacher reminds them that this is the same ending they have seen on *coming, looking,* and *playing.* At the same time, they grow in their ability to use beginning consonants and consonant blends. They meet more compound words and they find they can read combinations like *cannot, schoolhouse,* and *somewhere.* Less common endings begin to appear, and they compare *walk* and *talk,* and *book, cook,* and *look.* As they read more widely they meet more words with similar configurations and single vowel differences or differences in vowel combinations such as *well, will,* and *wall,* or *mail* and *meal.* These words provide an opportunity to develop more skill in using vowel sounds.

By third grade, children's command of the sounds of individual letters and of most common beginnings and endings should be reasonably sure, and they should be learning to find these sounds in longer words, growing more skilled in working with syllables, and learning less common prefixes and suffixes. One group may discover that they can read *leaves* because it fits into the story and begins like *leaf.* They talk about the plural form and then look at other words forming their plurals in the same way. Soon they find that they can read *loaves, knives,* and *wives.* They may work out *careful* because they know the beginning, and the end looks something like *full.* They dictate other *ful* words and examine their list, which may contain *cupful, spoonful,* and *painful.* Out of this experience they learn both the pronunciation and meaning of the suffix *ful.* In grade four, the words for comparison may be *attention, position,* and *station,* all learned originally by word-recognition techniques but now compared to develop the *tion* ending and to build more skill in syllabication. To teach a new sound, the starting point, at any grade level, is to help the child relate it to a word he knows.

Care needs to be taken to gear the help given a child in discovering new sounds to his present level of operation. If a third-grader is stumped by the word *engine*, and knows neither the *en* beginning, nor the soft *g*, nor the *ine* ending, he is facing too many difficulties in the one word to make for a useful experience in learning the component sounds. At this point he should probably be told the word, and should remember it from its general shape. Later in the year, when he has met several other words with the soft *g*, or with the *en* beginning, he may be able to identify these sounds, one at a time. The ending *ine*, as pronounced in *engine*, is so infrequent in primary vocabulary that little time is likely to be spent with it. Word-recognition devices are used to relieve the pressure when the analysis of a word is too difficult to be a fruitful experience for a child not only at the primary level, but on into the intermediate grades.

Help the child test out sounds he has learned in new settings. Learning to identify sound elements by finding them in familiar words is a first step in the word-analysis process. A second step is to learn to see the sound element in an unfamiliar word and then to combine it with other elements in the word so as to pronounce it. Usually these two techniques are stressed in the same activity, as when the teacher of the child who has mispronounced *this*, points out that it starts like *them* and *there*, and then asks him to try the sound in the word that was causing him trouble; or when a third grade child says *let' r* for *later*, and the teacher blocks off the first and last letters and says, "There's a word in here you know," or covers the *r* at the end, and says, "Look at this much of it," and then asks the child to try the whole word. However, there are times when children will benefit from additional practice with a new sound after they have helped to discover it.

One method of providing additional practice with a new sound is to ask the children to try it in several other new words. The reading of a story is usually not interrupted for long with such activities, but time can often be found at the end of a group reading session. If the children have compared *cow* and *now* and have identified the *ow* sound, the teacher may ask them to try to pronounce other words of which they are likely to know the consonant beginnings. What can they do with *bow* and *how*? In giving this practice, a word such as *row* would not be used, partly because its meaning is likely to be unfamiliar, which would put the children in the position of

naming what would be, for them, a nonsense word, and partly because the letter *v* is not as likely as some other letters to be a well-known consonant beginning at first.

Another way of giving practice with a new sound element is to ask the children to name other words beginning or ending with the same sound. This helps children learn to listen for sounds, but it is more risky than suggesting other words to them, as they may recall a word with different spelling, give a nonsense word, or occasionally give a word spelled the same but pronounced differently. For example, the children may be working with the *ate* combination in *late* and *gate*. When asked for other words ending the same way, someone may remember *bait* from last weekend's fishing trip with his father, or *wait*. When this happens the teacher is usually wise to write the new word on the board, and to acknowledge that it does sound the same. She may then ask the children if they can see the letter combination they want, and they may conclude that there are other combinations of letters which also say *ate*. At this point the *ait* combination would probably be set aside and returned to at a later date.

As children become more skilled in word-analysis techniques, sufficient practice with a new sound is often given by using it in the word that caused trouble. First, the problem word is written on the board. Then two or three familiar words containing the same sound are used as clues. When the child can identify the needed sound he tries it in his difficult word. Third-grade Sally encounters the word *likely*. She knows it begins with *like*, but she is not sure of the ending. The teacher writes *only* and *lovely*, both of which have been recently used in a class experience record. Sally says them, and identifies the *ly* on the end. Then, as the teacher runs her pencil under the syllables, Sally says *like-ly*. She tries it again and blends the two syllables completely. The teacher then asks what it means, and checks a little on Sally's understanding of the context. Later she may ask Sally to try the word again to be sure she has it. She may also take special care to check the next time an *ly* word appears.

As children acquire a larger stock of letter sounds and phonograms, the problem may not be one of teaching a new sound, but of helping them identify sound elements they know in two- or three-syllable words. In this case, the teacher's help may be almost entirely directed toward the process of breaking down the new words. "How does it begin?" "What does this part in the middle say?" "Let's cover

the rest of it so that you can see." "Now, can you put on the ending?" Let's try them together again." At first the teacher may take on the burden of identifying the syllables in order to help the child see the correct parts to pronounce. However, it is helpful to encourage a child to try to find the needed parts himself whenever it seems likely that he will be successful. Sometimes group discussion will suggest two or three ways of breaking down the word, all of which lead to an acceptable pronunciation. Such versatility is to be encouraged.

Work type activities such as those suggested in a later part of this section, offer other means for providing additional practice with new sounds. The help that is given during group sessions when children are reading a story, or during children's independent reading activities, must of necessity be short so that they do not lose their train of thought. Work type experiences provide an interesting setting in which children who need extra practice can concentrate on word elements and new sounds.

Make it easy to see and to hear sound elements. Part of the technique of making it easy for a child to identify sound elements in familiar words is to present them so that they stand out clearly. In pronouncing a group of words with a common sound element it is helpful to stress the sound slightly. Telling the child the part of the word to which he is to give special attention as two or three words are pronounced is also helpful. If words are being written for children to study, common elements will be seen more easily if the words are placed one under the other, rather than side by side. If the common element is an ending, the words may be written so that the endings come directly one under the other. If flash cards are being used as an aid to working with words written on the chalkboard or on an experience record, the child may carry the card to the appropriate word and literally place it underneath. If a child meets a new word in story materials, it is often desirable to write it on the board or on a pad of paper where it can be underlined or blocked off easily rather than to ask him to look at it in his book.

In helping children discover word parts it is often desirable to block off the part under discussion by some physical means. In working at the chalkboard it may be helpful to cover with the hand all but the part of the word the child is trying to identify. A finger can be used on a word in a child's book. Children can be encouraged to use their own hands or fingers in similar fashion. Uncovering a

word one sound element at a time by moving a hand, or a piece of paper, across it may help with the blending process. Saying the word with the child, or having the group say the word in concert as a hand is moved under the syllables, may be useful. Since the final task is to learn to see word-parts in an unmarked word in context, the effect of devices that present the word with unnatural spacing or marking should be counteracted by seeing that, before he has finished, the child has taken several good looks at the word in its normal written form.

Help the child to use context clues to check. One of the most important checks on the accuracy of the analysis of a new word is to see whether it makes sense in context. The child who has learned to make maximum use of picture and context clues is often more independent in his reading than an inventory of the number of sound elements he can recognize in isolation or the number of words he can read in a list would lead one to believe. What could be planted in a garden and begin with *let*? *Lettuce* seems to be the only possible answer, and the teacher confirms that this guess is correct. Is the small word *was* or *saw*? It starts with *s* and it makes sense to say, "I *saw* baby." The word looks like *string*, but it doesn't make sense to say, "Jack was *string* the lemonade." What was left out? *Stirring* is a longer word and has *stir* at the beginning.

Because skill in using context clues is an important aid to word analysis, the child needs to meet many of his word-analysis problems in situations where context clues are available. This means that a good share of his help with new words needs to be given as he reads stories, informational material, or books for recreation. It also calls for a consistent policy of asking, "Does it fit in the story?" When work-type activities are used for added practice many of these need to be developed around short paragraphs and questions where correct answers can be checked in context.

Encourage independence. A basic principle underlying all the foregoing suggestions regarding the development of word-analysis techniques is to encourage a child's independent discoveries. The aim is to help him reach the place where he is able to, and disposed to, figure out new words for himself. The list of ways to study a new word included in the description of the second grade at the beginning of this chapter represents the discoveries of a group who are beginning to take command of their own word-analysis activities. When the problem of presenting new words before they are met in

the story was raised earlier in connection with word-recognition activities, it was proposed that study of words before reading the story be reduced as rapidly as it seems possible for the child to work out the words for himself. "You know how that one starts." "Try it, I think you can get it for yourself." "Let's write it up here, I think you can tell what it is." "Can you think of one that begins the same way?" "Did you get it by yourself? Good!" These are the comments that make it fun to work with words and a challenge to try one's wings.

Deciding Which Sounds to Stress

Use the child's word-analysis needs and discoveries as a guide to the order in which sounds are taught. To say that a child should be helped to learn sound elements by identifying them in familiar words is not much help in deciding where to begin and which sounds to stress first. Suggestions as to how best to plan the sequence of a child's word analysis activities range all the way from proposals that a planned program be developed in a definitely organized fashion to recommendations for incidental guidance as the child reads widely.

Recommendations for teaching new sounds in a definite order usually presuppose one of two types of reading programs. Either the consistent use of a single basal-reader series is assumed, where there is an opportunity to foresee which words and which sounds will be used the most frequently and where the activities in an accompanying workbook are planned to stress new sounds in a definite sequence; or a planned series of word analysis activities is proposed, based on special reading-matter and work-type exercises and often distinct from the child's other reading activities. Back of such proposals are the recognition that the techniques of word analysis are not easy to grasp and the fear that some children will fail to develop this important skill if the teacher does not work at it vigorously and systematically.[5]

The reading program that has been suggested in the preceding chapters has proposed wide reading experiences and contacts with many types of materials. Suggestions have been made of ways of keeping the child's word-recognition vocabulary within his grasp, so that he reads easily and with enjoyment from the beginning, but these proposals are not of a nature to restrict his reading to any given

[5] See for example, William S. Gray *op. cit.*

vocabulary list. When children are working with many types of material, there is no way of predicting exactly which sound elements they will meet the most frequently or what parts of words they will identify first. This suggests that the most effective order in which to teach new sounds is that which is based on the sounds that recur most frequently for a given class, together with the discoveries the children themselves are making. Even when a single basal reader series is being followed story by story, the reading vocabulary appearing in other classroom materials adds many new elements. Teachers find frequently that the discoveries of children and the proposals of teachers' manuals and workbooks do not agree completely on which sounds are the easiest or the most important to learn first.

A second, and perhaps the most important argument for teaching new sounds in the order in which they seem to be most appropriate for a given group lies in the fact that the objective of the word analysis program is to help children gain independence in their reading as rapidly as possible. This means that they need to be given help in meeting every new word analysis problem that seems within their present level of ability. One of the major reassurances to those who fear that the lack of a reasonably definite sequence of word analysis activities may result in gaps in children's skills and knowledge lies in this ultimate objective. No sound element or word part needed frequently by a child as he engages in wide independent reading should be left untaught for long once he has reached the point where he seems able to learn to use it. A program of word analysis activities arising from the problems and discoveries of a given group should not, then, lack thoroughness or vigor. It may actually take more careful planning to capitalize on the word analysis opportunities offered by children's reading experiences than it would to follow a series of suggested lessons.

In order to capitalize fully upon the word analysis opportunities offered by children's reading experiences, teachers have at least four types of responsibilities. First, it is important to be alert to the child's discoveries, and to help him refine them. "Yes, they both begin with *l*. What sound do you hear when you say them?" "That's right, there are two small words in it that you know. Can you put them together?"

Second, teachers need to be aware of word analysis possibilities the child does not see. It is not always the youngster who first says, "They begin the same way, don't they?" Often the teacher asks, "Who can

see any way in which these words look the same?"; or points out, "We made a rhyme, didn't we? Can you see the two words that rhyme?"; or challenges, "If you look carefully there is part of this word that is just like a word you know."

Third, it is important to encourage the independence that has been proposed as an ultimate goal. "Billy got that one without any help at all. Tell us how you did it." "Here are some new words that might cause you trouble in the story. I wonder how many of them you can figure out by yourselves."

A fourth responsibility is to sense when special practice is needed and to provide for it. This may mean spending a few extra minutes with three or four children setting up a special combined reading and spelling group to work on word sounds, or providing the whole class with special work type exercises stressing certain word-analysis problems. In the point of view that it is helpful to capitalize on the problems the child is facing, there is nothing to preclude providing extra practice whenever it seems needed.

When children's problems and discoveries guide the sequence in which new sounds are taught, there is not likely to appear to be a very orderly sequence of growth. They may be working with beginning sounds one day, and with rhymes another; with a structural analysis into root and ending at one point and with a distinction between middle vowels at the next. Even in programs recommending a definite order in the development of sounds, there is no attempt to exhaust beginning sounds before endings are taught or to avoid two- and three letter combinations until single letters have been learned. Parents sometimes find this practice confusing, as a child may know the sounds of some of the letters of the alphabet and not others, or may respond to one three letter combination and have trouble with another that looks just as easy. Actually, the process is not as confusing to the child as it may seem to the adult looking on. In the first place, he is learning to make his own active discoveries about words. Second, he is acquiring his knowledge of new sounds and syllables in the order called for by his reading, and thus is prepared to handle his own particular reading needs. Third, and perhaps most important, he is learning from the beginning to make a flexible attack on words, suiting the elements he uses to the demands of the situation.

Be alert to sounds likely to be useful early. Even though children's reading experiences are used as a general guide in determining the

order in which sounds are to be stressed, certain word-parts are likely to have value early, and the teacher can be prepared to watch for opportunities to give help with them. One of these is the *s* ending, which the child is likely to meet in a preprimer. This lends itself to easy structural analyses, as the child can see clearly the root words with which he is already familiar. Long before he knows other parts of the words, he may be able to change *like* to *likes, come* to *comes,* or *toy* to *toys.* Other endings such as *ing, ed, es* are also likely to be identified early and serve the same purpose in aiding in an easy structural analysis.

Since an effective analysis of a long word depends on the child's ability to work from left to right, common beginnings and beginning combinations are also useful early. Some of these will be developed at the preprimer and primer levels. Often the child can guess at the complete pronunciation of the word if he knows approximately what it means from the context and how it begins. Knowing beginnings also helps to distinguish words like *was* and *saw,* or *on* and *no.*

Small words that appear as syllables or phonograms in larger words are useful parts to identify early. *It, in, arm, at, as, is,* and others appear frequently in typical primary vocabulary. It is not safe to teach a child to look for small words in larger ones as a routine word-analysis procedure, since the small word often appears in combination with other letters that change the pronunciation as, for example, *there* in which the child could find both *her* and *here,* or *wait,* or *ring.* But he can be encouraged to try out a structural analysis that takes account of the small word. If it does not work he must look again for his clue. "There is *part* of this word that sounds just like a word you know," has proved to be useful phrasing.

Depending on the particular vocabulary of the child's reading-matter, certain large elements are likely to recur frequently enough to be useful early. Combinations such as *ake, ack,* and *ell* appear in many relatively simple primary words. On the other hand, *ight, ough, ine* are not as likely to be used often. Similarly endings, such as *tion, ious, ment,* and prefixes, such as *ante, counter, de, ex,* can usually safely be left for older children and the occasional words that contain them be taught on a word-recognition basis.

Teach sounds the child can both see and hear. Part of the difficulty in learning to read and to spell the English language is that the same letter combination may be pronounced in many different ways. For example *ough* is found as an ending in *cough, slough,*

through, thorough, and *hiccough.* Even as simple a combination as *ow* may be met by the child first in *cow* and then in *slow.* The small word *in* appears clearly in *pin,* and is lost in *train.* Assuming that the *ine* sound has been identified, the child still has to recognize it in *pine, engine,* and *magazine.*

One basic principle is not to try to teach two sounds for the same phonogram in the same lesson. If the word is *slow,* the sound might be developed from words such as *grow* and *snow.* For the time, the child would be encouraged to try to work out for himself the pronunciation of other words in which *ow* has the same sound, but would be taught *growl, now, owl* by their general configuration. Later he can be helped to discover this second sound for the combination *ow.* If he gives an *ow* word which does not fit with the group he is studying, the teacher can always say, 'Yes, it looks the same, but it doesn't sound the same does it? Let's think of some words where we can hear the sound."

It is helpful also to teach the child to work with as large a sound element as he can both see and hear. Structural analysis—root and prefix or suffix, the two words in a compound word, the syllables in a long word—is usually a more rapid process than working from one and two letter clues. When a word needs to be broken into phonetic elements, the larger the element that can be used, the more efficient the analysis is likely to be. *Candy* is better seen as *can-dy* than as *c an-dy, faster* as *fast er* rather than *f as-t er;* and *something* as *some thing.* Teachers can encourage children to look for large elements by choosing with care the words they use as a basis for teaching new sounds and by blocking off appropriate large elements in helping the child to see the part he needs to pronounce.

A suggestion, somewhat contradictory to the proposal just made that large sound elements be used, is to avoid breaking apart letters that will usually be met in combination. *Store* is better seen as *st-ore* than as *s-tore,* and *stop* as *st-op* rather than *s-top.* Similarly, *blow* is broken into more helpful elements for later use if it is seen as *bl-ow,* and *play* as *pl-ay.* Teaching sound elements is a process similar in many ways to the word recognition methods used to teach the child whole words. Part of the problem is to see that he meets the same element over again in many settings until he is thoroughly familiar with it.

In spite of all the foregoing suggestions, versatility in attack is essential. It is more important to encourage a child to try out several

approaches independently until he hits on the one that gives him the word than it is to hedge him in with too many rules about how to go about it. If, for the moment, he uses a less efficient analysis, it is a small matter in comparison with the incentive to study words for himself that comes from a successful performance. The group may be stumped by the word *string*. Mac may recognize *ring* and blend the *st*. Opal may see that it begins like *street* and add the ending. Adam may work out *window* because he sees *win* at the beginning and knows what is needed in the context. Alice may know *in* and *ow* and blend the remaining letters. Veronica may start with *wind*, as in *wind* thread, and then change her pronunciation when she sees that it will not work. Class discussion can sometimes be centered helpfully on such discoveries. Children may be encouraged to tell how they figured a word out. Often there are opportunities to point out the value of seeing larger parts, or of breaking a word into elements that have a familiar look. The ultimate check, in all word-analysis procedures, is the context. "Did it make a real word?" "How does it fit in the story?" 'Does it make sense?' 'What does it mean?"

Use research analyses as general aids. As general guides to the order in which sound elements are likely to become important for primary children, teachers may find it helpful to refer to research analyses based on primary vocabulary lists. Manuals to most basal-reader series provide analyses of the vocabulary of the specific series. These are often the most helpful lists of sounds for the teacher who is following one series rather closely. There have also been analyses of the frequency with which sound elements recur in primary word lists. These have been used to suggest the sound elements to be taught at different grade levels.[8] Teachers can use such lists as an aid in identifying the sound elements to teach, and in deciding whether to stress certain elements early or to leave them until children are reading more widely. While these studies should not prescribe the activities of a given group, they may also serve from time to time as a general aid in checking on progress.

8 As examples, see Donald D Durrell, *Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities*, pp 200–205 Yonkers on Hudson: World Book Company, 1940, Paul McKee, *The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School*, pp 254–257, 295–303 Boston Houghton Mifflin Company 1948

Developing Word-Analysis Skills through Group Reading Activities

Give help in working out new words as the story is being read. Since the child eventually needs to be able to work out new words in context, some of his most important help in word analysis is given in the course of the group reading and discussion of a story. Interruptions to give help with unfamiliar words need not be long. If it is apparent that the child is going to have much difficulty working out the word, he can be told what it is and allowed to continue reading so that the sequence of the story is not lost However if one or two clues can help him figure it out for himself, the occasion is seized to develop that much more independence in word attack.

As suggested in Chapter VII the first reading of the story is likely to be silent This is the time to help with new words so that any later oral reading can be a relatively smooth and enjoyable performance The teacher works in a low voice with the child having difficulty while the others continue to read Sometimes she writes the word on the chalkboard for him sometimes she writes it on a pad of paper sometimes she merely helps him cover part of it in his book After he has figured out the word the child goes back to the story to try it out in context If the teacher is not sure from his comments that he knows the meaning or sees the relationship to the story, she may talk with him a bit about the word before he goes back to his reading.

As children talk about the story or read parts of it aloud to confirm their answers to questions, other difficulties with words will lend themselves to group discussion John said *stand,* but this is the word in the story As she says this the teacher writes *stay* on the board. Who can tell the difference? It could be *big,* because he certainly was a big dog but our story uses another word that starts the same way Watch while I write it Who can tell, now, what the story really said about the dog?' 'How could you tell that the word was *bad*? By upper second or third grade, the discussion may center on finer points of meaning dependent on correct analysis "It was *longer,* but the book tells us something else about that walk. Look at the word again. Who can say it?' 'Yes, it ends in *est* What does it mean if it is the *longest* walk? Do you think they were tired?" Discussions of this sort do not detract from the meaning of the story The word study helps to develop insights not possible as long as an incorrect word is used.

Develop word-recognition experiences so as to contribute to word-analysis skills. It was suggested earlier that word-recognition activities should contribute to word-analysis techniques. At first, attention may be called only to the length of the word, to its general shape, or to some outstanding element. Later, children may be encouraged to see how many of the list of new words they can work out for themselves. Often this discussion period provides a little time to help children to compare the new words with others they know, to recall a useful sound element, or to learn a new sound. Every word on the list need not be used for word-analysis purposes. Some will be difficult and time will be saved if the children are told what they are. The teacher will need to adjust her word-analysis emphasis to the competence of her group.

When the work of a reading group closes with a short review of new words, this presents another opportunity to stress word-parts as children grow in word-analysis skills. They can look again for familiar sounds, try to find the parts of the word that caused them trouble, and perhaps take time to give rhymes, to name other words that begin in the same way, or to study two confusing words as they are written one under the other. If the teacher has listed, or left on the board, the words for which help was asked during the story, these may be added to the review.

Encourage children to help each other. More mature readers can gain valuable word-analysis experience by helping each other. Reading partners can be set up for certain reading activities, and each child be charged with the responsibility of helping the other with hard words. Children can talk about how to give help without telling exactly what the word is, and enjoy the experience of trying to give partial clues. When the two youngsters working as reading partners are of about equal ability, one may have a useful hunch about a new word when the other is baffled. Caution with regard to assigning children to help each other seems in order when children have limited word-analysis skills, as a certain amount of fruitless guesswork may result. Some question may also be raised about how often to assign a good reader to help one who has limited ability. Although such a procedure can at times be a helpful way of making it possible for a child to read independently while the teacher is occupied with another group, the actual teaching of new sounds to a child who is having trouble usually needs to be in teacher's hands.

Plan group help so as to allow for individual differences. Even children who are able to read material of about the same difficulty level will not learn word-analysis techniques with equal facility. There will also be differences occasioned by the discoveries they have made for themselves and by the word-parts they have been helped to identify in other reading experiences. Work in groups needs to be adjusted to these differences.

Help can be individualized in a reading group by allowing time for silent reading, during which the teacher can work with each child on the special words causing him trouble. In group discussions of new words, children who are less skilled sometimes can be encouraged to try to work out the words, while those who know how can serve as experts and withhold their comments until their help is needed. Children with greater skill can be kept interested in this process if the child who is having difficulty is not allowed to struggle too long before others in the group are invited to help him. Quick reviews of words can be managed so that children work on those which represent their special problems if the teacher has kept a record of who asked for help. Then, too, everyone need not learn a new sound the first time it is introduced. Those who are not quite sure of it this time may be able to get it the next. Often it is better to keep a group discussion of new words moving rapidly and then to use work-type activities, independent work periods, or special practice groups to give additional help to children who need it, than it is to try to prolong group activities until every child has mastered the new sounds.

Developing Word-Analysis Skills through On-going Classroom Activities

Capitalize on classroom reading experiences. Opportunities to give help in pronouncing words arise whenever children are reading in the course of classroom activities. Children dictating a note to *Dear Mother* stop to comment on the *m* sound. Mary reports that *Bobby* is to help water the plants and is told that it is *Betty* and helped to see the difference between the two words. A child composing a poem seeks for a word that rhymes. The committee planning to report in the third-grade science activities decides to arrange the workers' names in alphabetical order. Joe misreads *Tuesday* for *Thursday* on the bulletin-board notice and takes a second look.

Linda thinks her library book is going to be about a *big nose,* only to find that the word is *noise.* Teachers pick up such confusions as the day's work proceeds.

Often the help given with word analysis during classroom activities is on an individual basis as a child asks for a new word in his recreational reading or struggles with informational material. However opportunities for group work also arise. Times when the children help to dictate experience records are natural situations in which to comment on words. Some of the words on lists developed in unit activities will be difficult to analyze, but others may be very useful for word analysis purposes. If the lists are alphabetized, children can learn to respond to beginning letters. Sometimes several words connected with a unit will have a common root. Often sounds that have been learned in other reading activities will recur on such lists.

Help with word analysis given during on-going classroom activities is, for the most part, casual. Activities are not held up while children work laboriously with words. They take only a minute or two to get help with an unfamiliar word, to comment on the similarity of two words on a list, to note a familiar root as the teacher writes a new word on an experience record. However, the total amount of word-analysis experience is increased greatly by these many informal activities.

Give help as children begin to write and spell. Effective spelling and effective word analysis are two aspects of the same problem. To read a new word, the child must be able to see the parts that give the correct pronunciation. To spell it, he must produce the correct letter equivalents of these parts. It is ineffective spelling to memorize the letters in a word one at a time without reference to syllables, just as it is ineffective reading to try to blend one letter at a time without paying attention to larger word elements

Beginning spelling activities are very similar to beginning activities in word recognition.[6] The first-grader begins to write before he knows the exact sound elements of all the words he is writing. First-grade teachers are likely to write the needed word for the child. He then copies the same configuration on his paper. His first spelling job is one of making sure that what he has copied is correct, not of remembering all the letters, just as his first reading job is one of remembering the total configuration of the word, not of responding

[6] David H. Russell, "A Diagnostic Study of Spelling Readiness," *Journal of Educational Research,* 37 (December, 1943), 276–283.

to the separate word-parts. Thus, from the very start, spelling activities are planned so that the child thinks about the look of the whole word, and learns to sense that it is incorrect when it does not look as it should.

Children's first writing and spelling experiences are with words they can read, or with words they are taught to read as they plan to use them for writing purposes. Often, in the beginning, what they write will be composed as a group record. In the process of writing the word, or often the short message, on the chalkboard for the children, there are opportunities to comment on shapes and sounds. If the message is to be taken home to mother, or to be sent to another class, the children then copy it carefully.

When the time comes to encourage a child to remember how to spell a word independently, the study procedure is one that calls for a thoughtful response to the sounds of the word. Modern methods in spelling advocate that the child be taught to look at the word while he says it clearly, thinking about each part as he speaks it. Next he may say it with his eyes shut, trying to see the parts as he says them. Then he may look back at the word to check the accuracy of his memory. Then he may cover it and try to write it, saying the parts as he writes. Last, he checks his writing, part by part, against the original word, pronouncing it as he does so. Primary teachers rarely leave this study job to the children alone. As they look at new words together there are opportunities to give help with word-analysis techniques—to find words that begin the same, to learn new letter combinations, to identify familiar endings, to break a word into useful sight and sound elements, moving systematically from left to right. Sometimes these spelling activities may involve the class as a whole, but there are many arguments both from the point of view of good spelling and from that of good reading for a certain amount of work in smaller groups.

Mention has been made at several points of the practice of developing lists of words children need for their writing but which they have not yet been able to learn to spell independently. Teachers who do not use such lists are usually prepared to write the needed words for the child. In some classes children file the words they have asked for in their own file boxes. All these systems of giving help make it possible to discuss the look of a word with a child as it is being written for him. When simple alphabetizing systems are used to file the words, another word analysis skill is being exercised. Whether

the aim is to spell the word for the child, or to help him spell it for himself, the methods of working with words in spelling activities should supplement and reinforce those used in reading, and vice versa.

Provide for some preliminary acquaintance with dictionary skills. Dictionary usage, as was pointed out in an earlier section, is largely a problem for the intermediate grades. Mention has already been made of the possibility of using picture dictionaries with primary children as means of stimulating interest in word meanings. Primary word-analysis activities can also, at times, make a contribution to simple dictionary skills. These skills, in turn, give the more mature reader another effective type of help with his word-analysis problems. Possibilities for beginning to develop a feeling for alphabetical order have already been mentioned. Primary children will not do much with diacritical marks, but there may be occasions for at least acquainting them with the purposes of such pronunciation aids. Once in a while a third-grade textbook will have a simple glossary or include a pronunciation key after a place name. In the course of spelling and reading activities children may also be acquainted, in a general way, with such terms as long and short vowels and silent letters. Dictionary use, like other reading skills, starts very simply with readiness experiences. Primary word-meaning and word-analysis activities can help to provide some of these experiences.

Providing Special Practice Activities for Word-Analysis Skills

Provide work-type activities that help children think about the meanings of words. The amount of special practice provided to help develop word-analysis skills will need to be adjusted to individual abilities just as the special practice in other reading skills requires such adjustment. The children who are making the most rapid progress in developing the knack of studying words by themselves may receive all the help they need through group reading activities, through the word study connected with spelling activities, and through the individual help they are given during independent reading. At the other extreme, children who find word analysis difficult in spite of the ample encouragement given in regular classroom work may, by the time they reach upper-second or third grade, be ready to profit from an extended series of systematic lessons planned around specially selected work-type materials. In between are the youngsters who have trouble with particular word-parts or who need a little

more help than that given during group sessions in order to develop security in their approaches to words.

Since the child's ultimate task is to learn to use a word in context, it is important that his practice activities help him to think about the meaning of the words with which he is working. Some of the most valuable work-type exercises call for completing sentences, for answering questions based on short paragraphs, for completing rhymes, or for choosing the correct word to fit into some other context setting. Many of the word-recognition exercises described in the preceding section serve equally well to develop word-analysis skills. Ways of varying the choice of words so as to call for fine discriminations were given when those exercises were illustrated.

Sometimes it is helpful to use lists of words or sets of three or four words in which the child underlines given beginnings, endings, or phonograms. Special care needs to be taken in using such activities to assure that the child does not merely spell out the letter combination he wants without thinking of its pronunciation. Having children discuss their answers in a group session, read aloud the list of words with which they have been working, or even work together on the whole exercise may help to prevent thoughtless underlining.

Since children need to learn to hear sounds as well as to see word-parts, a certain number of word analysis activities need to be oral. Some of these can be developed as group experiences where the teacher reads several words and the children listen for given sounds. Often the words are then written on the chalkboard so that children can see the common letters. Work-type activities that put major emphasis on sounds can call for giving rhymes, or for choosing pictures of objects whose names begin or end with a given sound.

Work-type word analysis activities, especially for the unskilled reader, should present the word as a whole. He may choose which of three words answers a question or completes a rhyme, identify the two small words in a compound word, or underline a given root or ending in a list of words, but whatever his activity, he works with the total configuration of the word, and his task is to see its component parts. Later, as children develop skill in spelling, it is possible to have a certain number of word-building activities. They may build compound words, add prefixes or suffixes to form new words, or add the correct beginnings or endings to phonograms such as *ack, ight*, or *all* to form words that match given definitions.

Workbooks have a contribution to make to word-analysis skills.

These commercially-prepared materials provide activities using pictures and many other novel formats that hold children's interest. Among the available workbooks are some that focus entirely on word-study activities. These may be of special value for the child who needs intensive help. Workbook activities in word analysis, like those in word recognition, need to be used selectively. Time that children could be spending profitably in wide reading should not be used on work with sounds they know, or on workbook pages that develop no new skills.

Learning to analyze words is a matter of learning to think about the techniques one is using. Whatever the kind of work-type activity, time needs to be allowed to discuss it with the children; to talk about the new word-parts; to read the new words aloud; to discuss how individual children hit upon the right answer; to suggest other words that have the same sound; or to recall what part the word played in a recent story or experience record.

Typical word-analysis activities for primary children are given in the suggestions that follow. Readers should also refer to the activities suggested for word-recognition purposes, given earlier, and, for work with more advanced readers, to the suggested word-study activities for the intermediate grades, given in Chapter XII.

Activities that help the child identify sounds can ask for: Completing rhymes, choosing a picture that completes a rhyme; underlining in a set of pictures the ones that begin or end like a given word; finding and underlining in a series of sentences the words that rhyme with a given sound; reading a list of words aloud and underlining those that begin or end with a given sound; changing beginning, middle, or ending letters to form new words according to special instructions—changing *bell* to something you throw, to a boy's name; writing the beginning sound for each of a set of pictures; choosing from three or four letters the one with which a given picture begins; listening to a group of words read by the teacher and telling what the common sound is; reading a set of rhyming words and underlining the common sound.

Activities that help a child identify fine distinctions between words can call for: Choosing between three words calling for a careful look at beginnings, middles, or endings in answer to a completion or multiple-choice exercise; choosing the right answer to a riddle from three words that are very similar in form; choosing which of three or four similar words matches a picture; choosing which of a group of three or four similar words the teacher has read; choosing which of two or three sentences, in which a single word is varied, matches a given picture.

Activities that help in identifying structural elements in words can ask for: Finding the two single words in a series of compound words and

trying to give the meanings of each of the compound words; drawing a circle around the root words in a set using a common suffix; making compound words by putting together two single words, and telling what they mean or choosing the sentence which they complete correctly; making new words by adding a prefix or suffix and using them in a sentence.

Use occasional word games and related activities. The same general precautions regarding the use of word games and similar devices for word-recognition purposes also hold true for word analysis. Used wisely, these materials have a contribution to make. For a group as a whole, they offer an occasional novel way of giving more practice with word-parts. Often, for the child who has found the techniques of word analysis particularly difficult, they sharpen insights into the job to be done. A device such as a word wheel, for example, is constructed so that the word-part being stressed is slightly separated physically from the rest of the word. Word games or similar practice activities may also sometimes be the needed stimulus for the occasional child who has an exceptional visual memory for the configurations of words and highly developed techniques for using context clues and who has seen little need for learning how to work out more detailed analyses of words.

Many of the game-like devices discussed in the section on word recognition can be used for word-analysis purposes by varying the degree of discrimination required. Until children develop skill in spelling, word games will need to be built around the word as a whole. Later, simple versions of games such as anagrams may be used. From the word-analysis point of view, word-building activities such as anagrams are likely to be more helpful if they make use of phonograms and blends as well as single letters. Whatever the game, it needs to be used as a teaching device, not merely as a spare-time activity at which children work alone.

Word games focussing on sounds can be developed through: Fishing for words that rhyme, begin with similar sounds, contain a given sound element; playing bingo by covering words that rhyme or begin like the word read; seeing who can read all the words on a word wheel; seeing who can read through a booklet where a series of cards containing different beginning sounds are fastened over a common ending—*bl-ack, st-ack, b-ack, p-ack*; seeing how many similar words one can get when they are flashed on flash cards or in a tachistoscope; playing adaptations of the game of authors with sets of words with the same beginnings or endings.

PART IV

EXPANDING READING SKILLS IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

CHAPTER X

PLANNING THE READING PROGRAM IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

THE CHILDREN AT WORK IN LATE SIXTH GRADE

If a visitor were to come back three years later to look in on the third-graders described in Chapter VI, now at the end of the sixth grade almost ready for junior high school, what reading abilities would he find? The personnel of the class has remained relatively constant over the intervening years. Two or three youngsters have moved to other schools; a few families have left town; but the variation in ages and intellectual abilities is about the same. How has their reading progressed?

The range in reading abilities has increased. The three years have done nothing to close the gap between the ablest and the poorest readers. The range is now from low fourth-grade ability to nearly tenth grade. Two children are most at home with easy fourth-grade books. Four score between fifth and sixth grade on standardized reading tests. About ten more are somewhat under seventh grade on standardized tests, but most of this group, given time and some guidance, can read seventh-grade materials if the need arises. Slightly over half the group have little difficulty with seventh-grade books, and two can deal with the technical demands of most adult materials if the concepts involved are within their experience.

Greater variation in specific skills is also in evidence. Of the two children who read adult materials, Allen is an extremely slow, careful reader. He still needs help in increasing his reading speed. Several others of varying levels of ability join with him in practicing rapid reading. Sue reads remarkably well. She adjusts her techniques effectively to the specific reading task—skimming when her work allows it and reading with the necessary accuracy when details are needed. She enjoys reading aloud and displays considerable skill in entertaining an audience.

Among the children whose abilities are the most limited there is also

great variation in specific skills. Most are now sure of the sounds of common phonetic elements, but several still have difficulty with words of two or more syllables. As one of these youngsters tries to sound *resourceful* by breaking it as *re-sour-ce-ful,* it is apparent that he is not yet skillful in selecting the elements most effective for correct pronunciation. Another child pronounces the word correctly, but does not know what it means and misinterprets the passage he is reading because of this. Effective oral reading is difficult for these two children and for several others unless they are given ample opportunity to prepare simple materials ahead of time. The class as a whole enjoys reading aloud and finds many opportunities to participate in reading both stories and poetry.

Information getting techniques also vary considerably. Among the relatively good readers, several children are skilled in reading rapidly for the general gist of the story but are inaccurate in reporting details. Others do well so long as factual reporting is needed but find it difficult to summarize the general import of an article. Many still tend to be encyclopedic in their reading and report all facts, pertinent or otherwise. Throughout the year all have worked on the problem of taking notes on their reference reading in suitable outline or summary form. Less than half the group is able to exhaust the reference possibilities of a given topic. Many still stop when the most obvious aspects of a problem have been covered. Most of the children know how to use their textbooks in the various content fields for reference purposes, but a few still have difficulty in reading accurately the descriptive and explanatory passages. There is a wide range in ability to use visual aids, such as charts, maps, and graphs, effectively. Equally great is the range in technical vocabulary.

Growth is still irregular. The children who gave the most promise at the prereading level were not all among the best readers when they reached the third grade. Similar shifts in position have occurred from third grade to sixth. The two children who are nearly adult in their reading ability have been consistently among the best readers. They are both somewhat above average in intelligence, and both have been given much encouragement to read at home. The remedial help provided for Jane, who was ill in her first year in school, and for Bill, who transferred to the school after a series of first- and second-grade teachers, has now shown its effect. Both children handle typical sixth-grade reading problems without difficulty. Jim, one of the slow learners in the room, is doing about as much, with his fourth-grade books, as he is able. He has had special adjustments in reading instruction and materials all along the way, has been encouraged to take leadership in group activities that do not demand much reading, and is regarded as one of the best athletes and most reliable helpers in the class. He is a happy and well-adjusted boy, in spite of his limited intellectual ability. Sally, the other slow learner in the third grade, was immature and very small physically. She found the active children of her own age increasingly overpowering, and was held for a year in the third grade. Now she is making a much better adjustment with children who are a year younger.

Uses of reading are now very broad. Even in the third grade the children were reading widely. However, they were limited both by their own lack of skill and by the scarcity of informational materials written simply enough to meet their needs. Now in the sixth grade there are few barriers to wide reading. The classroom testifies to the variety of the reading activities. A bookcase near a special reading corner and a bulletin-board display of colorful jackets give evidence that recreational reading is important. The contents of other bulletin boards indicate the extent of the reading demands of various class projects.

On one bulletin board are lists marked *Committee Problems about Housing Project.* A glance at these indicates that the children are interested in a local housing development. Questions center around why the particular site was chosen, what determined the size of the apartments, how the tenants are to be selected for the new homes, and what made the project so expensive. Wide reading will be needed in newspapers, current periodicals, and technical books on health and housing. Next to this section of the bulletin board is a list labelled *Plans for Assembly.* The class contribution is apparently to be a dramatization of an historical narrative. The reading assigned to various children includes such items as:

Reread the story to make suggestions for scenes	—Andy's group
Look up the encyclopedia on flintlock guns	—Mary and Jack
Check history texts for suggestions on costumes	—Bill's group and Sunny's group
Look up language text to find how to write conversation in a play	—Writing Committee

Another bulletin board contains clippings from the local newspaper. Headings such as *New Inventions, Our Town, The UN* indicate that reading the daily paper is a regular activity. On part of this same board is a chart which indicates that learning to read is, itself, a center of activities. Over half the children are listed for one or more special study groups headed *Spelling and Word Study, Practice for Speed, Reading Accurately, Using Graphs.* Beside each list is a set of suggested practice activities for individual work. A tentative schedule on the chalkboard indicates that part of a long period set aside for individual work on skills will be devoted to group work on word study, and to the children in the *Practice for Speed* group. Children range far afield in their reading now. Books for fun, many types of informational materials and reference books, current magazines, textbooks, pamphlets, daily papers, are all used as the need arises.

Greater flexibility and variety characterizes the activities of the instructional groups in reading. In the third grade the work of the reading groups provided for large unit activities in reading, and for special practice for skills. At the point where the children's reading ac-

tivities were described, the least advanced readers were working regularly as a group on reading skills, using basal texts for their practice. One of the other groups was planning to share stories from a basal text, and the second was locating science information. Now, in the sixth grade, the variety of activities is even greater and the personnel of groups even less fixed. The most retarded readers have received instruction as a group on a regularly scheduled basis throughout the entire year. Even this group has not had constant membership. The children have been joined from time to time by others needing similar help, and they have occasionally separated to work in other groups designed to meet special needs.

The special practice groups listed on the bulletin board were set up for varying lengths of time. Of these groups, the one on word study has met all year, with varying membership. For a month it took in the whole class, when special study of root words and word origins was under way. The group practicing for increased speed started to work only two weeks ago, when certain children began to work with greater amounts of reference materials and found it difficult to read rapidly enough for their purposes. Earlier in the year, other groups spent short periods working on the problem of speed. The children in the group working for accurate reading are rapid readers who have recently shown a tendency to skim materials too carelessly. Two weeks' concentration on the importance of going slowly when necessary will probably solve the problem. Three of the best readers have not been in a group for special help all year, although they have participated in many other types of group reading problems.

Other reading projects have run parallel with the special practice groups. At present, one of these is a unit on poetry, which has now developed into a series of experiences in choral reading. The entire class has worked on this, and each of the four groups into which the children are divided is preparing special materials to share with the others. Every child has also taken on some special reading responsibilities for the study of the housing project and for the assembly program. While these plans are under way, groups or individuals who encounter special difficulty will be given help. Some of the needed assistance may call for another special practice group, but it is likely that most of the help will be given as the work on the various units progresses. The choral-speaking presentations will call for the groups to meet for a number of practice sessions. The study of the housing project is likely to lead into some all-group instruction, since never before, in the experience of this class, has the problem of locating current information and interpreting newspaper reports been as crucial. The dramatization will demand few new skills, although accuracy and authenticity in costuming will require considerable research work. Some children will need help both in locating the information and in interpreting it. Instruction in how to read goes on at many points in this classroom.

Meeting the reading needs of older children calls for a complex organization of classroom experiences. Large projects demanding

many skills; small-group practice of varying extent when difficulties arise; changing personnel and changing foci of group instruction; and, above all, children who understand what they are doing and who feel responsible for carrying out their plans and improving their skill—these are the characteristics of the reading program in the intermediate grades.

This chapter gives the overview of the activities of the reading program for intermediate-graders. Like Chapter VI, which outlined the general nature of the primary program, it suggests aims to guide the choice of activities. Next, there is a general picture of the types of reading experiences appropriate for more skilled readers. Finally, suggestions for meeting the complex problems of grouping and scheduling occasioned by the wider reading activities of older children are summarized. Classroom procedures suggested in this overview are discussed in detail in Chapters XI and XII.

EXPANDED AIMS OF READING INSTRUCTION FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

There is no sharp dividing-line between the reading programs of the primary and the intermediate grades. Learning to read is a matter of continuous growth, not a series of steps to be taken at specified age or grade levels. Intermediate-grade teachers will have some children with primary abilities, and primary teachers will have some who meet the reading demands of typical intermediate material with relative ease. The aims of the intermediate grades can be discussed under the same headings as were those of the primary grades—wider reading purposes; more skill in adapting techniques to purposes; increased ability to locate information independently; increasing skill in handling the technical difficulty of the material; and growing independent recognition of words. The ends do not change, but the standards to be achieved are higher. These expanded goals help to determine the materials, the reading experiences, and the types of instruction provided for maturing readers.

Children use reading as a tool to serve many purposes. In the intermediate grades there is a marked increase in the variety of reading done. Before the end of the third grade some children will have developed sufficient ability in analyzing unfamiliar words independently to allow them to venture into new materials at will. Increasingly, in fourth and fifth grades, others will reach the place where unfamiliar vocabulary causes little trouble. Although materials still are selected in the light of the age and experience of the

group, the range and variety of reading-matter is much greater than it was in the primary grades. Each new kind of material and each new problem will call for new competencies. Among the most important areas in which demands will be made for increased reading skill are the following:

First: Children should continue to enjoy recreational material, but their reading should include many different types of fiction, poetry, biography, and informational material. As they read more widely, they should become more discriminating in their tastes. They can be expected to develop standards for evaluating what they read, to become interested in special authors and illustrators, and to enjoy different writing styles.

Second: There should be much wider use of informational materials. In the intermediate grades these include textbooks to a much greater extent than they did earlier. In many schools children will work with five or six books in a given subject-matter area rather than with a single adopted text. Standard encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs, and other compilations should be used more frequently. The more mature children should also be able to follow much of the news in the daily paper, to locate articles in current magazines, and to read special pamphlets. Of all the new demands made on older children, those occasioned by this greatly increased variety of informational materials are likely to be among the heaviest.

Third: Intermediate grade children should show increased skill in evaluating what they read in terms of their purposes. In recreational reading this should result in wider acquaintance with authors and illustrators, in increased sensitivity to differences in writing style, and in increased insight in selecting books for varied purposes. In informational reading, intermediate grade children should be able to make more discriminating decisions regarding the appropriateness of material to their problems. Perhaps most important, they should be able to handle more complex problems of appraising the accuracy of what they read—deciding how to check when textbooks disagree; determining a writer's qualifications, distinguishing between editorial writing and news reporting, distinguishing fact from fiction.

Children become increasingly skillful in adjusting reading techniques to their purposes. The greatly increased variety of materials explored by older children makes a correspondingly heavy demand upon their ability to adjust their methods to specific purposes. This is complicated by the fact that materials are no longer written in relatively simple narrative style, and by the fact that greater amounts of material are often read. Among the most important reading skills that older children will need to learn to use more flexibly are the following:

First: There must be increased ability to read for the general gist of a passage. At the intermediate level, a passage may vary in length from a single paragraph to a complete chapter or an entire book. Children may be called upon to pull together the ideas from several sentences or from several paragraphs. It may be important to note the sequence of ideas. Often children will need to use the ideas from several paragraphs to draw conclusions not clearly stated, as when they try to decide whether life in ancient times was simpler or more complicated than life today. The mature reader must be able to sense the implications of facts in relationship.

Second: Intermediate grade children need increased ability to read accurately for detailed information. Some of the reading demands they face will call for accurate facts, others for the detailed step by-step reading that is needed in following directions. Increased skill will be needed to select the exact details which bear on a problem. Of particular importance, as materials and problems become more complex, will be the ability to see details in relation to the gist of the whole passage—the implications of precise information about climate in a discussion of the industries of a country, or the relation of dates to an historical sequence of events.

Third: Maturing readers need to develop increased ability to adjust their reading speed to their purposes. Children should become able to skim for the general gist of a paragraph and to read slowly and carefully for directions and exact details. In recreational reading, they should know when to read rapidly and when to use slow, careful reading in order to enjoy an author's style, or to appreciate the rhythm of poetry. Perhaps most important, intermediate grade children need to develop ability to change pace, reading rapidly when their purpose is merely to locate particular information and to sense its setting, and slowly when the material containing the needed information has been located.

Fourth: Oral reading skills should show marked improvement. As they progress through the intermediate grades, children should gain more mastery of the technical aspects of their material. They should be able to give more thought to the impression they wish to convey to the audience. Poetry as well as prose should be read with skill.

Fifth: More able readers should show flexibility in using several techniques to achieve a single purpose. A child needs to be able to skim to locate special information, to read the part he is interested in carefully, noting details; perhaps to skim again to make sure of the setting of the details; and to evaluate what he has read in terms of its accuracy and appropriateness for his purposes. Flexibility of reading method in terms of purposes is one of the clearest marks of a skillful reader.

Sixth: Older children face increased problems in recording what is read. Whereas a primary child will take only occasional notes, intermediate grade children have many needs for accurate records of their reading. The skills required include learning to summarize the gist of a passage without copying it in entirety, making accurate lists; writing

simple outlines; collecting information on the same topic from several sources; keeping simple bibliographical information.

Independent readers become more adept in locating information. Primary techniques of using the pictures, the title of the story, and the table of contents as major aids in locating information will not suffice in the intermediate grades. One of the most important problems for the teacher at this level is to help children develop more effective ways of locating desired information. Many new skills will be needed. These include:

First: Children need to become familiar with the purposes of common resource materials. They need to know, at least in general terms, the kind of help to be found in such books as a dictionary, an encyclopedia, or an atlas. They need to become familiar with the major functions of other types of resources to which they might turn—textbooks, special reference books, newspapers, magazines, fictional materials built around authentic facts. In addition, they should begin to build standards for evaluating such resources—to know which ones are likely to be most helpful on current problems; to become aware of possible difficulties in using fictional material for information, to know how to interpret reports in daily papers and magazines.

Second: There needs to be gradual development of the techniques necessary to use common resource materials effectively. Intermediate-grade children need to feel at home with an index, particularly with the most important aspects of cross references and sub-topics. They must build skill in determining which key words are most likely to lead them to information on a particular topic. They must be effective in using alphabetical order and guide words. They must be able to handle the special study aids in their textbook—summary paragraphs, chapter and section headings, and illustrations set off in special type.

Third: Of major importance in the location of information is ability to use the library. Wherever such facilities are available, independent readers need to know how to use them effectively. They should know how to locate books in a card catalog. While they may have little need for complete understanding of the cataloging system, they should know enough about the general location of materials to be able to browse at will. They should also begin to identify by name some of their favorite authors and illustrators. Major projects involving wide reading cannot be carried out with ease if it is necessary to wait for an adult to locate all the needed materials.

Technical difficulties of more complex materials are handled with relative ease. In the primary grades, the technical difficulty of the reading-matter lies to a great extent in the length and complexity of sentences, in the problem of following the thought of a passage

through an increasing number of sentences in a paragraph and pages in a story, and in such special problems as the sentence carried over from one line to the next or from the bottom of one page to the top of the next. At the intermediate level, such problems are largely mastered. However, the more difficult materials of the upper grades present a number of new technical difficulties.

First: Informational materials are often printed in a style distinctly different from the narrative style of primary materials. Section and paragraph headings, summaries, discussions specially spaced or set up in different print, columnar arrangement of materials, and other variations in style may aid or hinder the reader, depending upon the ease with which he uses them.

Second: A great many new visual aids begin to appear, particularly in materials in the various content fields. Advanced readers are likely to meet such visual aids as maps, graphs, charts, pictograms, tables, and especially inserted explanations which parallel the context. In many books the context will not be clear unless the visual aid is properly interpreted.

Third. Each content field has its own particular set of symbols and signs. Although many difficulties, such as reading chemical formulae or mathematical equations, are more typically the problems of high school readers, children in the elementary grades must begin to interpret the numbers and terms in a simple arithmetic problem, a few common arithmetical formulae, the diacritical and accent marks in the dictionary, and other such symbols.

Children develop increased competence in working with unfamiliar words. The child who goes into high school still uncertain of how to work out the pronunciation and meaning of an unfamiliar word will be severely handicapped. Technical terminology appears in increasing amounts in the materials read by intermediate-grade and high school students. In many cases the meaning as well as the configuration of the word is unfamiliar. Children in the intermediate grades need continued help with their word-study skills. Among the areas in which they should develop increased competence are the following:

First: There needs to be a rapid increase in the child's ability to understand the vocabulary of his reading material. In the intermediate grades, every content field will have its set of unfamiliar terms. Even recreational reading will introduce unfamiliar words. Many of the terms which cause the greatest pronunciation difficulties will also be unfamiliar in meaning. Concepts may be unfamiliar, even though the word is easy to pronounce. The intermediate-grade child needs to develop a greatly increased stock of word meanings.

Second: Some words will still need to be learned on a word-recognition basis. Even the skilled adult reader relies heavily on his memory of the general shape of a word. Once having worked out or looked up its pronunciation and meaning, he does not expect to have to do a phonetic or structural analysis every time he meets it. Intermediate-grade children meet an increasing number of new technical terms and personal and place names. If they are to read with ease, they need to be helped to become thoroughly familiar with these words.

Third: Primary grade acquaintance with sound and structural elements should be extended to all common word parts. Of particular importance at the intermediate level is growing acquaintance with prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Older children should also begin to make use of some of the most important rules regarding pronunciation and spelling.

Fourth: Skill in analyzing unfamiliar words will be extended to two- and three-syllable words. In analyzing these longer words, the intermediate grade child needs to become skilled in selecting the word parts that make for the most efficient analysis. He also must be able to identify word elements that aid both in recognizing the word and in determining its meaning. Ability to use context clues skillfully in determining both pronunciation and meaning should also increase.

Fifth: There needs to be increased skill in using a dictionary, both for pronunciation and for meaning. Intermediate grade children need to learn to use this aid independently. Furthermore, they need to develop an interest in new words and a desire to use them accurately. This is an attitude that extends into adult life. Primary teachers may lay the foundation through their discussion of new and interesting words, but many of the most important experiences are given in the intermediate and upper grades.

These are the general objectives of the intermediate grades. The exact ways in which specific problems will arise will depend upon the abilities of the given group of children and the reading demands made by the materials in their classroom and the projects they undertake. Each teacher must take responsibility for identifying the present status and particular needs of her class.

PROVIDING READING EXPERIENCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

The reading program for children in the intermediate grades needs to be planned to capitalize upon the increased ability to read independently and extensively possessed by these more skilled readers. This means, first, providing opportunities to use reading in varied types of challenging activities related to group or class projects. In many classrooms, such reading experiences will be developed as

integral parts of units of work. Second, the children need to be encouraged to engage in wide independent reading. Third, instruction and practice need to be provided for groups and for individuals as they meet specific problems calling for new or better reading skills. Many of the most valuable reading experiences of children in grades four, five, and six are supplied by their on-going classroom activities. Often they have almost more reading to do than time will permit. All these experiences need to be seen as important aspects of their total reading program.

To a much greater extent than in the primary grades, the instruction and practice designed specifically to develop increased skill need to be provided on a flexible basis. When children are reading widely for many purposes, there is no way of predicting exactly when or how they are going to encounter a new or more difficult reading task. The help that is given to individuals or to groups will be most effective when it is planned in relation to the new reading problems being encountered as the children carry on a variety of classroom activities which necessitate ability to locate and use printed materials. This does not leave the development of new skills to chance. Rather, it becomes the responsibility of each classroom teacher to make continuous appraisals of the present reading status of her children in order to identify points at which help is needed. It will also be the responsibility of each classroom teacher to plan so that the reading experiences she provides for her children as part of their on-going classroom activities raise new problems and call for increased skill.

The flexibility and variety of the reading activities in any one classroom will, of course, need to be adjusted to the abilities of the particular group of children. Some fourth-graders will be more like primary children in the degree to which they can engage in wide independent reading, and in their need to have the activities that introduce new words and provide practice in new skills developed in a definite sequence. Smaller groups in the fifth and sixth grades may find typical intermediate-grade materials difficult and may need to work with easier books and less elaborate activities. Increased independence needs to be capitalized upon as it is attained; more challenging tasks provided as children are ready for them; and special practice planned in the light of the type of problem the children have encountered.

Using Unit Activities as a Source of Reading Experiences

Reading units develop around interest in story materials. Group activities centering around reading-matter such as the story-type materials found in basal readers have a legitimate place in the intermediate-grade classroom. These activities make their greatest demands for increased reading skill when they are developed as units of work. This approach to story materials should be used much more frequently than it is in the primary grades.

The steps in developing a reading unit are the same as those suggested for unit activities in the primary grades. The children concerned meet with the teacher; lay plans for what they would like to do with the story or block of stories; spend a day or more carrying out their plans; and finally share their efforts, either with members of their own group or with the class as a whole. Reading units developed around story materials will vary in elaborateness from an enjoyable summary discussion of a single story or set of stories to a play presented for the entire class; an entertainment planned for parents, such as the assembly program planned by the sixth grade with whose activities this chapter began; a bulletin board display to be shared with other groups; or creative stories, poems, or exhibits stimulated by the material read. Chapter XI describes in detail how such activities can be developed.

In the activities of the sixth grade described at the beginning of this chapter, reading units are only one of many types of reading activities in which the children are engaged. Experiences connected with reading units are not always included in the daily schedule, nor are all members of the class necessarily engaged in developing reading units at any one time. The pattern of scheduling and grouping required to provide the most effective balance between reading units and other types of reading activities is more complicated than the traditional plan of scheduling a given number of reading groups to meet daily to read the materials in selected basal texts, story to story. However, it pays rich rewards in the interest it fosters, the type of reading experience it makes possible, and the flexibility it provides for using to best advantage all the reading experiences of a given day.

Several factors need to be considered in deciding how and when to provide time in the schedule for reading units. One is the question of what other reading problems the children are facing. There may be times when it is important for a group to spend several days learning

how to locate information in reference books. Again, the difficult problem of learning to select accurately the information needed to carry out plans for a social-studies unit may take up the time usually set aside for group reading experiences. Even when the children face no new reading problems, the task of reading widely for the information needed in a unit in a content field may be sufficiently heavy to justify devoting to it the time that might otherwise be used for experiences connected with a reading unit. It may also, at times, seem desirable to encourage reading interests by allotting more time in the schedule to independent recreational reading. Then, too, specific weaknesses, such as difficulties with word analysis, may call for time for special practice.

There are several ways of scheduling reading units to allow time for other reading needs. Groups need not move immediately from one reading unit to another. A unit may be completed; other types of reading activities may be planned for several days, then another unit may be begun Since the teacher and children lay careful plans at the beginning of a unit, it is often possible for a group to work alone for a few days while the time set aside for reading instruction is spent on a different reading problem. When plans are clearly understood, it is also possible to stop work completely on a reading unit for a day or so in order to make room for another reading activity, and then to return to the job of concluding the unit. Conversely, there will be times when an elaborate reading unit will occupy a large amount of class time and other activities will need to be curtailed to allow for it. Such projects as exploring a series of biographies or tall tales, planning a book exhibit producing a make-believe radio or television program for another class, entertaining parents, or preparing a choral-speaking program offer not only enriched reading experiences but many valuable related language activities. They deserve a prominent place in the classroom from time to time.

Another factor to consider in scheduling reading units is the degree to which the members of a particular class can read independently. More skilled readers will be able to plan a more elaborate unit, and to work for longer periods without the direct supervision of the teacher. Part of their reading activities can therefore be scheduled for times when the teacher is working with other children on other types of problems. More skilled readers are also capable of securing much valuable experience through recreational reading and through wide reading for information. It may be desirable, then, to reduce the

total amount of group work with reading units for these children in order to allow for such independent reading experiences. On the other hand, it is usually desirable for the teacher to work closely with children who have limited reading skill and to provide more consistent experience with the relatively simple materials in basal readers.

Adjustments in scheduling reading units to allow for individual differences in ability can be made in several ways. The children who need the most extensive experiences with materials in basal texts may work out a series of reading units, while others in the class spend more time on recreational reading or undertake more ambitious reading activities related to the content fields. Often groups of different levels of ability can be helped to plan unit activities requiring different amounts of independent reading. The teacher can then adjust her guidance to the problems of each group. Then, too, when several groups are at work, plans can be developed so that the teacher is not needed urgently by all groups at once. Thus, while all may work on activities connected with reading units for a full period set aside for reading, the teacher may check only briefly with the children in one or two groups and then spend her time with the others. As children grow in their ability to read independently, it becomes increasingly easy to have several worth-while activities moving forward smoothly.

Grouping for reading units is likely to vary with the particular purpose of the unit. In a classroom where there is a wide range of ability, children of like skill are apt to work together so that materials can be provided in terms of their general reading level. However, this is not always necessary. Groups of children with common interests may work together. In a unit growing out of recreational reading, children may work on a common topic, but read books geared to their individual abilities. Sometimes children who usually read together will divide into smaller groups to carry out parts of a plan—working in pairs to illustrate favorite stories for a bulletin board, or in groups of three or four to get ready to read aloud for the class. It is also possible for the entire class to plan together for a unit and for each group then to do its assigned part with materials of suitable difficulty. In the sixth grade described at the beginning of this chapter, for example, all groups were working on aspects of a unit on poetry. While these variations in grouping make for a com

plex classroom organization, they are not unduly difficult to achieve in situations where children help to plan their own activities.

Units in the content fields provide important reading experiences. Children in the intermediate grades face many of their most difficult reading problems as they read informational materials in the content fields. The sixth-grade bulletin boards described at the beginning of this chapter illustrate the variety of reading activities that may be undertaken. These activities are frequently part of units of work in the various content fields.[1] Where the unit activities of primary children are likely to center around such simple reading-matter as experience records, simple texts, and perhaps a few easy books, those of intermediate-grade children call for successful reading of many more kinds of materials. The resulting reading problems will range from those of handling vocabulary and writing style to those of locating information; evaluating what has been read; using library techniques; and interpreting charts, maps, graphs, timetables, and other illustrative aids. The reading program for the intermediate-grade child needs to be planned to provide specific help with problems such as these.

Time to give help with the reading problems of units in the content fields can be scheduled in several ways. Typically, a little informal assistance with reading is given during the time normally set aside for work in the specific content field. A few minutes may be spent discussing how to read arithmetic problems. Directions may be checked before a spelling lesson is begun. Time may be taken to discuss the pronunciation of some unfamiliar science terms before the children start to read a new chapter in their text. This type of informal, but consistent, help with reading problems does not require the allotment of special time in the daily schedule. It is, however, a valuable aid in the development of increased reading skill.

Often, reading problems in the content fields require more intensive instruction than that which can be provided incidentally as daily activities progress. Help with these problems is frequently scheduled

1 Unit activities centering around problems through which the child is helped to become better acquainted with the world in which he lives have been called *activity units, experience units,* and *subject matter units.* To avoid specific curriculum connotations, the practice of most texts in teaching reading of calling the areas to which the child turns for information the *content fields* has been followed, and the term *unit in a content field* has been used in this book to refer to those unit activities in which the child reads for information to solve a problem, regardless of the particular focus of the problem he faces.

as part of the activities of the unit. For example, a period at the beginning of a unit may be given to problems of locating reference materials and to developing a class bibliography. As the unit unfolds, a day's work may be devoted to problems of note-taking; time may be taken to learn how to interpret graphs or other visual aids; or a period may be given to discussion of how to evaluate conflicting sources. If an adopted textbook used by the whole class proves difficult, time may be taken to study parts of it together, and to discuss how to read it. It is a legitimate expenditure of the time scheduled for activities in a content field to set aside a period to give help on reading problems.

Time usually allotted to reading units may also be used to give help with the problems children face as they read the textbooks and related reference materials of the content fields. This scheduling possibility was discussed in the preceding section. It is possible also to center the activities of groups set up for special practice around problems children are meeting in their informational reading. Skills such as using alphabetical order, using an index, locating information in a standard reference book, or reading accurately for details, for example, can be developed in part through the use of work-type materials in practice sessions.

Unit activities in the content fields frequently involve a certain amount of small-group work. As these groups carry out various aspects of the unit, there are opportunities for the teacher to give help on reading problems. Note-taking techniques may be checked for one group at a time. Special problems of locating material may be discussed with the group directly concerned. A single child who is having trouble may be given special help. Such work sessions provide excellent times for concentrating on the specific problems in the setting in which they arose.

Grouping, for the reading activities of units in the content fields, is likely to depend on the plans for the unit and the difficulty of the reading task. Certain common problems, such as those of locating material or learning to use a new reference book, are likely to be attacked by the class as a whole. When the class is broken into smaller groups, the children who work together on a special aspect of a unit are likely to be those who have a common interest in it. If interest is the basis for grouping, materials of varied difficulty will be needed. If the reading task is very difficult, children may sometimes work in

groups set up on the basis of reading ability. Some teachers have found it desirable to have the poorest readers work together as a group so that they may be given special help, even though the more able readers work in groups of their own choosing. Whatever the particular group organization, it should be planned to facilitate the progress of the unit activities while making it possible for help in reading to be given to those who need it.

Not all teachers in grades four to six teach in self-contained classrooms. Whether or not science and social studies are taught by the same person who teaches reading, children will need help with the reading problems these content fields present. The ways of scheduling this help will be essentially those just suggested for using part of the time given to a unit in a content field for special attention to reading, and the methods of grouping similar to those that have just been discussed.

Encouraging Independent Reading

Recreational reading is a source of expanded reading activities. With increased reading skill should come increased interest in recreational reading. Wide experience in independent reading of both fictional and informational materials is an important factor in building reading interests and tastes. It is also an excellent source of the type of motivated practice that develops increased reading skill. Intermediate-grade children need to be encouraged to go far afield in their independent reading activities.

Since recreational reading is a matter of individual interest, groups are not used as frequently as they are for other types of reading activities. Teachers are more likely to encourage children to select their own books and to read widely at their own paces, both at home and at school. However, with older children, as with those in the primary grades, a certain number of group activities can do much to encourage independent reading. Special reading clubs of children with common interests can be set up. All-class periods can be spent sharing opinions about library books. Story hours can be used to encourage children to share favorite books with groups of varying sizes. Since each child usually reports on his own book in such group situations, there is no particular need to set up the groups according to reading skill, although, if the purpose of such activities is to interest children in books, some thought has to be given to the difficulty

of the books about which they are hearing. There is likely, also, to be considerable regrouping as new interests develop and new ways of sharing books are suggested.

In addition to special group activities designed to share recreational-reading interests, it is possible to help intermediate-grade children develop a certain number of reading units around their recreational reading. Even the unit activities in a content field can be used to provide recreational-reading experiences as children, individually or in groups, read authentic fictional materials or interesting factual accounts that bear on their particular problem.

It is as important to provide definite time for recreational reading in the classroom schedule of an intermediate-grade class as it is in the primary grades. The amount of unscheduled time children have out of school for free reading will determine, in part, the amount of time that should be scheduled in school. In some classes, where early morning responsibilities for lunch money, lost and found departments, or safety guards make it difficult to start class work at once, a fifteen- or twenty-minute reading period can provide profitable occupation for children who do not have other responsibilities. It is also possible to schedule a period for independent reading once or twice a week. Sometimes time is set aside to browse through new books after a visit to the library. One day a week may be used for book clubs and other such group activities. In one class, a period to share recreational reading was scheduled just prior to the time the children went to the school library to return their books. In another, sharing recreational reading was a regular part of the program of a Friday afternoon club meeting. In a third, a sharing period scheduled as the first activity in the afternoon was used, in part, for individual or group reports on recreational reading. Broad reading interests are more likely to develop when children have ample time to explore new books.

Regular classroom activities offer many opportunities for independent reading. Just as a primary classroom offers many day-by-day purposes for reading, so does the classroom of older children. Class plans call for careful detailed reading. A current events bulletin board, a daily school bulletin, or a series of brief descriptions of a science exhibit offer other opportunities to read carefully. Captions to pictures can provide information related to unit activities in the content fields. Children's stories or poetry can be posted for others to read. Even the directions for a spelling exercise, the description of

the correct form of a business letter in a language textbook, or the discussion of fractions in an arithmetic text can make a contribution to increased reading skill.

The informal reading experiences offered by the typical intermediate-grade classroom are not normally given a definite place in the schedule, nor do they typically call for group work. Children turn to them as needed. The secret of encouraging these many short contacts with reading is to give the children a share in developing their class plans so that special bulletin boards, group plans, the daily schedule, display corners, letters from other classes, and special notebooks have meaning for them and play a real part in their daily activities. It is important, also, to have an informal classroom atmosphere that provides opportunities during the day when children can move about, check plans, read bulletin boards, or study exhibits.

Providing Special Practice as Needed

Concern with better skill leads to short-term groups. The challenge of learning to read skillfully calls for still another type of group activity in the intermediate grades. Many children will need, from time to time, a series of experiences with work-type activities designed to develop specific skills. In the sixth grade described at the beginning of this chapter, short term practice groups are scheduled on *Spelling and Word Study, Practice for Speed, Reading Accurately,* and *Using Graphs.* Each of these represents a separate skill In these practice situations, the materials used bear directly upon the reading problem, as does the children's discussion of their work. Such help is an important supplement to the experiences provided by the many other types of reading activities that have been described

Because of the many reading activities in which older children are engaged, they are even more likely to have varied needs for special practice than are children in the primary grades. No two classes, and no two children will face problems that are exactly the same. To be most effective, groups will have to be established as needs are identified. At times the group will be a small number of children who have a common problem – a few who are having trouble with word analysis; several youngsters who are encyclopedic in reporting on their reading and who need to learn to summarize; five or six who are reading too carelessly. At other times it will be the whole class, in difficulty with their attempts to read poetry aloud or floundering with a new reference book.

Even with the more varied needs of older children, scheduling short-term practice groups is not so complicated as it sounds. They do not provide the total practice in reading skills. Reading units, the reading activities of units in the content fields, and recreational-reading experiences all supply abundant practice and all allow for considerable reading instruction. Special practice groups take care of difficulties that are not overcome easily in these other settings. Furthermore, in a class of thirty children there will not be thirty kinds of difficulties and thirty separate needs for special practice. Many of the class will adjust to new and more difficult reading tasks without undue trouble. When difficulties do arise, they are likely to center around a reasonably limited number of major skill areas, such as word analysis, oral reading, reading carefully for detailed information, skimming for the general gist of a passage, evaluating materials, locating information, or using reference books effectively. Finding time in the schedule for special practice activities is typically a matter of providing help in not more than three or four problem areas at any one time. All children are not likely to be in special practice groups at once, nor will there necessarily be special groups in operation all the time.

There are several points in the daily schedule where special practice activities can be given a place. When the need for practice involves the whole class, as it is likely to do when the reading activities of a unit in the content fields pose a new problem, help may be scheduled for part of the time usually devoted to the unit. Ways of finding time for this type of practice were outlined earlier when the reading activities related to units in the content fields were discussed. Time normally set aside for unit activities centering around the story materials in basal readers may also be used for special practice. Sometimes small groups set up for special practice meet during a block of time set aside specially for work on skills. In this period some children may be reading, others completing arithmetic assignments, studying spelling, or engaging in various types of written language activities. On occasion, time can be saved by integrating the reading practice with help on another skill. A group of poor spellers may work on word-analysis skills, or a group of children who read arithmetic problems carelessly may work on careful reading as part of their arithmetic activities.

When short-term practice activities are most effective, they are de-

veloped as units of work. Children help to analyze their own difficulties. They share in identifying the need for special practice; help to decide whether they belong in a special group; and talk through the purposes of suggested practice exercises and how best to use them. Children also can help to set up the schedule for special practice so that they know when their group will meet. It is not unduly difficult for a child to meet a special reading obligation when he understands its purpose and has helped to decide what his responsibilities are to be.

Individual work-type activities have a place. Special practice groups are not the only means of providing the help needed to develop specific reading skills. There is also a place for individualized work-type activities—workbook exercises, special exercises planned by the teacher, special activities suggested in basal readers. When individual work type activities are used, they are likely to be scheduled for independent work periods when all children are working to improve basic skills. They may be listed among other things to do on daily plans or written as part of a pupil's individual work-sheet. Teachers who use individualized work type practice regularly often develop check sheets of reading skills from which the children themselves can determine their own practice needs. They are also likely to talk through the purposes of the work type exercises so that each child knows clearly what he is trying to accomplish.

Children who have special difficulty may need a more tightly integrated sequence of activities. The sixth grade described at the beginning of this chapter is typical of the range of reading abilities with which most intermediate-grade teachers will have to cope. At one end of the scale the children who are approaching adult skill will, to an amazing degree, provide their own practice and teach themselves new skills as they read widely to serve their own purposes. In the middle will be children who handle the classroom materials reasonably well, but who need specific instruction from time to time to supplement their classroom reading experiences. At the other end will be children who have difficulty with typical classroom materials and who need relatively more guidance, both in handling the day-by-day reading demands of their classroom work and in securing the practice needed to improve their reading skill. Some of these children will be working far below their potential level of ability and in need of remedial help. Others will be youngsters who learn slowly and who

will continue to need more than the usual amount of careful guidance to make progress commensurate with their ability. Both groups need a more tightly integrated sequence of reading activities.

The fact that the children who are having the most difficulty are likely to need a greater amount of carefully planned sequential activities in reading and more direct guidance from the teacher does not mean that they should be segregated and given a distinctly different program. They need to have experiences in working with reading units, to take part in groups locating informational material, and to engage in recreational reading. These activities are sources of much valuable practice in reading as well as important means of arousing interest.

A number of grouping and scheduling possibilities that allow for a more tightly integrated sequence of activities for children who are having unusual difficulty have been described. They may meet regularly to work with basal-reader series on reading units of varying degrees of elaborateness while children with greater skill engage in more varied types of reading activities. If it is desirable to give these retarded readers additional help, they may also form a special practice group. Mention has been made of situations in which the poorer readers continue to work as a group for unit activities in the content fields, so that special materials and assistance can be provided for them. Teachers have also mapped out selected workbook exercises for retarded readers to complete during individual work periods. Then, too, teachers have often been able to give a few minutes' extra help during independent work periods. In all these activities, the effectiveness of the reading experience depends in large measure on whether the retarded reader is provided with material appropriate for his ability.

It is easier to help poor readers engage in the activities they need if they are aware of their problems. When there is a classroom atmosphere of frank appraisal of individual difficulties, these children do not mind being placed in groups designed to give them special assistance or being asked to work with children who can help them. In another area they may be the helpers. In providing for special practice, teachers have often been able to challenge the children who need the most help to analyze their own difficulties and to share in planning their own remedial programs. Flexibility in the type of reading experience, and in grouping and scheduling, has been the keynote

of the reading program that has just been described. This type of program offers many avenues through which to assist the child who is having difficulty, just as it offers many ways of enriching the experience of the skilled reader.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION TO MEET THE READING NEEDS OF THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

Specific examples of methods of grouping and scheduling that help to provide for the varied reading activities of the intermediate grades were given in the preceding section as different types of activities were discussed. The same general principles that underlie effective classroom organization in the primary grades are the guides for meeting the grouping and scheduling problems raised by the more complex activities of older children. Three major growth trends need to be kept in mind. First, intermediate grade children are better able to plan and to carry forward independently the activities agreed upon. This makes it possible to have relatively more activities going on at one time, and to have longer units calling for more elaborate plans. Second, the children are more skilled in independent reading. As a result they can be given relatively more reading experience without direct supervision by the teacher. Third, the children are better able to analyze their own needs and to understand the purposes of practice designed to develop better reading skills. This means that there can be more direct discussion of reading problems and a greater variety of independent work type practice activities. The sections that follow summarize possible ways in which classroom organization can be planned so as to capitalize on this increased maturity.

Achieving Effective Scheduling

Large time-blocks are still the key to effective scheduling. Large blocks of time are characteristic of schedules in the intermediate grades just as they are in the primary grades. Unit activities are not impossible when short periods are used, but they are more easily carried out under a schedule that makes it possible to plan, to work on special activities, and to evaluate, all within one time-block. Work with individuals or with small groups also progresses more smoothly when the teacher has enough time to move from group to group without cutting short needed explanations. In addition, the larger

time-block makes it possible to extend activities a little when the task undertaken proves to be larger than expected, or to go on to other activities without loss of time if a problem clears up more rapidly than was foreseen.

The schedule for a typical fifth grade, given below, shows the same type of large time-blocks as those found in a primary schedule. This schedule represents an agreed-upon pattern for normal days. It would be adjusted in the light of special problems.

9:00 to 10:15	Work period devoted to development of needed skills.
10:15 to 10:30	Recess. Sometimes expanded to allow for a longer supervised play period.
10:30 to 11:30	Work on unit activities.
11:30 to 12:00	Open period. Special help in music planned for three days a week. At times this period is merged with the preceding period to allow for more time on the unit. It can also be used for help with fundamental skills.
12:00 to 1:00	Lunch.
1:00 to 2:10	Activities related to a unit centered around a second major group problem. If units in three areas are being developed concurrently, this period is sometimes divided into two smaller time blocks.
2:10 to 2:20	Recess. On two days a week this period is expanded to forty minutes to allow for special physical-education activities.
2:20 to 3:10	Individual activities on special problems or work on unit activities. Special help in art is scheduled for this period two days a week.
3:10 to 3:30	Planning and evaluation session.

This is the schedule of a self-contained room. Because the children work with one teacher, there are many opportunities for integrating their work with unit activities. Were they to go to a special teacher for all their work in such areas as art, music, science, health and physical education, and arithmetic, the specific time allotments for these areas would have to be more definite and somewhat longer.

The early morning period is used in this schedule for work upon whatever skills most need practice. Individual, small group, or all-class activities can be planned for this block of seventy-five minutes. The general routines of beginning the day would also be carried out

during this period by individuals or groups assigned special responsibilities. Except for an unusual problem, the class planning period in this schedule is set for the late afternoon. In other classrooms, it, too, might be included in this opening period. Later periods allow for a number of reading activities connected with units of work.

How might the activities of this fifth grade develop if one were to follow the children at work for a typical day?

The work period from 9:00 to 10:15 began with a brief check on individual plans. On the board were special assignments for various groups and a list of extra things to do for a social-studies unit and for a unit on health. Children turned to the activities on this list during the entire day as they had time. After general plans for the day were checked, spelling occupied the whole class for fifteen minutes. The words that were to be the basis of the next week's spelling activities were dictated as a pretest. As a group, the children took time to identify some of the most frequent errors. Then each child made plans to study the words he had missed. While some worked on with this, the teacher gathered the group having the most trouble with fractions and devoted twenty minutes to instruction, and to explaining some practice exercises. Others in the class had special work type activities in arithmetic to complete.

As the arithmetic activities ended, the class was ready to go on to reading. Three group activities were under way. One group was completing the independent reading of a set of humorous stories, and needed no special help. The teacher spent five minutes checking plans with a group of advanced readers who had volunteered to organize the reference materials for a new social-studies unit. Then this group worked on alone while the teacher met with the four poorest readers, spending most of the time on work-type materials in word analysis. The last few minutes of the period were spent by the teacher at her desk, checking on individual and group progress.

On the following day a slightly different balance of activities would be planned for the 9:00 to 10:15 time-block. The children who have just read the set of humorous and imaginative stories would be ready to discuss them with the teacher and to plan how to share them with the class. Work with the poorest readers would continue, spelling might be entirely a matter of individual practice, and more time for all class work in arithmetic might be found.

During the work period set aside for unit activities from 10:30 to 11:30, other needs for reading skills typically arose. The long period made it possible to give help without interfering with other plans. On the day being described, the class was just starting a new unit, and needed to locate information not readily available in its textbooks. The children first listened to the report of the small reading group that had volunteered to do some organizing of available materials. Other problems of

locating materials were raised during the discussion that followed the report. Then each committee took time to examine the materials more carefully, and the teacher found a few minutes to work on special problems with each group in turn.

On the following day the children might read independently, using the books most suited to their part of the unit, and the teacher be able to devote the entire work session to helping one child at a time. The four poorest readers would be provided with simple materials and be given special help until they were well started.

In the schedule being described, the half hour from 11.30 to 12.00 provided a short, but flexible, block of time that could be used in various ways. For three days a week it was allotted to work in music. On other days it was used as an unassigned period for special work, a way of giving more time to the unit activities of the preceding period, a period for class discussion of some new problem in connection with a skill, or a planning and evaluation period. By stopping the preceding work on unit activities earlier, this period could be made long enough for work on a special reading unit, for a series of creative language experiences, or for more extended activities on some other class project.

From 1:00 to 2:10, this schedule provided another long period for work on unit activities. This period was shortened twice a week to allow for more extended physical education experiences On the day of this visit, the children were investigating the nutritional values of some of their favorite foods, as part of a unit in health, and the need to read tables correctly and to interpret them in terms of the written content of the textbook was paramount. Since other plans for some experimental work had to be carried out, it was agreed that the period on the following day would be set aside for the whole class to explore further the problem of reading tables

The forty-five minute period following the afternoon recess provided a fourth large time-block for group or individual activities. In this class, these experiences often centered around language and related reading activities. Once a week, part of the time was given over to reports on library books. On the day being described, a group of about ten children who were much interested in writing short stories met to read their efforts to each other. Another group, who served as the editorial board of the school paper, spent the period making preliminary selections of items to be approved by the entire class for final inclusion in the paper Proofreading was a skill on which these children had worked particularly hard. Art activities came in at many places in connection with unit plans. At least twice a week, they were scheduled definitely for this last period.

In this class, the planning time at the end of the day varied in length with the problems that had arisen during the day. Although the immediate problems connected with the development of various activities were discussed during the period in which the activity took place, this session provided for a final check on work accomplished and for a look

at the schedule for the morrow. Needs for special help were taken into account. Projects demanding all-class attention, such as approving the articles for the newspaper, were definitely scheduled. Jobs that needed to be completed, together with a tentative schedule for the next day, were listed in a special corner of the chalkboard.

The activities of this class are illustrative of the variety of experiences that can make up a day's work for intermediate-grade children. The large time-blocks allow small groups and individuals to check their plans with the teacher and then to move ahead independently. The teacher is free to give help to individuals and groups because she is not needed to guide every step of each activity. Relatively large amounts of help can be provided for some groups because others are able to work without direct supervision. Over several days, many types of group and individual activities can be included because the use of each of the time-blocks is flexible, and is planned in relation to the demands of on-going activities

Every part of the daily schedule makes its contribution to reading skill. The problem of scheduling enough time for the reading activities of children in the intermediate grades is seen in a different light when every reading experience in which the children engage is thought of as providing an opportunity for reading instruction and for practice. In the situations that have been described, children are given special help with reading problems during units in the content fields. Time is also taken to call brief attention to reading problems whenever work with textbooks or supplementary materials seems to warrant it. When small groups are at work on special problems of locating information, individualized help in reading is provided. When all these reading experiences are taken into account, the problem of deciding how much time and what type of activity to include in a period set aside for reading instruction becomes one of determining what experiences are needed to provide a well-rounded reading program, not one of finding time to meet all the child's needs for reading instruction. Every teacher in the intermediate grades becomes a teacher of reading, and every situation contributes to the reading program.

Effective use of every activity in the child's schedule as a basis for developing reading skill cuts down the amount of time that needs to be set aside for reading instruction as such. It also makes for effective motivation, as the need for the reading skill is clearly apparent to the children at the time they are given the help. Further, it augments,

rather than decreases, the time available for other subject-matter areas, since it helps to develop more efficient readers and thus enables the children to do greater amounts of independent work and to explore a problem more extensively.

Flexibility in scheduling makes for more efficient use of time. It is possible to be even more flexible in the use of time in the intermediate grades than it is with younger children. This increased flexibility is an important aid in meeting the reading needs of older children. In the classrooms described, schedules are not haphazard. Time-blocks are set aside for specified activities. However, within these time-blocks the exact sequence of activities varies from day to day, and on certain occasions the entire block of time is given over to a problem not normally scheduled for that period. No one kind of reading experience is necessarily scheduled every day, nor is any one book necessarily followed story by story from beginning to end. The specific reading activities the children undertake are planned in terms of the problems they are facing and in the light of the balance in the reading experiences offered by their total program.

All children do not use the time for reading instruction in the same way. Part of the class may be working with stories in a basal reader while the rest are reading independently. Some may belong to a group meeting for special practice, and some may use the time for practice in other skills, or for other types of reading activities. Groups working with basal-reader series may read different amounts of materials, plan ways of sharing what they have read that differ in elaborateness, and need different amounts of guidance from the teacher.

The time devoted by the teacher to working with individuals and groups is also scheduled on a flexible basis. At one time she may work with the whole class on a common problem. At another, she may take a full period to help a single group lay plans. When several groups are working with basal-reader stories at the same time, their activities are scheduled so that all do not need the same amount of help on the same day. A few minutes may serve to check the plans of one group, ten more be devoted to starting an activity with another, and the remainder of the period be spent working closely with a third. Then, too, there may be days when help is entirely on an individual basis while the children read independently.

Flexibility in the use of time makes it possible to adjust more readily to individual needs. Special problems can be made the center

of attention more easily and the amount of help can be adjusted more readily in the light of the problems faced and the maturities of different groups. Flexibility in scheduling activities also frees the teacher more often to give a few minutes' special help to individual children.

Periods set aside for special work on skills guarantee time for special instruction. Even though there is flexibility in scheduling the reading activities of intermediate-grade children, there also needs to be a definite plan for helping individual children improve their reading skill. An important aspect of the schedule described at the beginning of this section is the time-block set aside for work on fundamental skills. This period can be used to capitalize on the growing ability of the intermediate-grade child to analyze his own strengths and weaknesses, and to help him to direct his own practice not only in reading but in numbers, language, and other skill areas. Plans for special activities during these periods are laid in terms of the problems that arise. Conferences with individual children or with small groups help to identify needs and to explain the purposes of the assignments. Individual assignment sheets, planned jointly by teacher and children, may help to guide the different activities. Sometimes a class planning session at the beginning of the period serves to help all children think through things to be done. Children may work alone during these periods, they may help each other as spelling partners, partners in number games, listeners and checkers in reading activities, or editors of written work, or they may be called together in groups of varying sizes.

In a time block set aside for work on skills, the teacher may take time for an all class discussion of a new problem, work with one or more small groups who are meeting for help on specific problems, or find time for a few minutes with a child who has a special remedial problem. Certain of these activities may be scheduled regularly, others adjusted to the needs of the particular day. These periods, which provide for considerable individual or small group guidance, are planned on the theory that a few minutes applied directly to a child's problem may be more valuable than a much longer period of time spent working with him in a large group.

Pupil-teacher planning helps to make a complex schedule effective. Throughout all the illustrations in this chapter, pupil teacher planning plays an important part in keeping activities running smoothly. Even first graders can take a responsible part in directing

their own activities. Older children are capable of laying more complicated plans, keeping them in mind over a longer period of time, and working toward a goal more consistently.

Planning goes on at several points in a typical intermediate-grade classroom. Often the major activities for the day are blocked out in an evaluation period toward the end of the preceding day. Children think through how far along they are; decide on the activities which will need the most time; list special problems that have to be solved; and note things left undone which will need special attention. The resulting plans can be written on the chalkboard and referred to as the new day begins. An alternate time for this session is in the morning before activities start. Detailed plans for unit activities or for work-type exercises are often made just as the period for this work begins, and short evaluation sessions are often used to check on progress as the period ends.

Planning sessions offer unparalleled opportunities to learn the procedures of democratic discussion and group problem solving. But teacher and children have to work together to develop effective techniques. It is not easy to give children a share in planning without devoting an undue amount of class time to unnecessary arguments, wrangles, and reviews. In part, the success of the joint planning session depends on how carefully the teacher, as class chairman, has thought through topics to check, points to raise, suggestions to offer, and the implications of alternate possibilities which might be proposed by children.

Children need to be taught to take an effective part in the planning process. Individuals who are inclined to push for their own ideas have to learn when to yield to the majority. Ways of compromising have to be worked out. Willingness has to be developed to abide by a group vote so that discussion can proceed to another aspect of the plan. Children also have to learn how to weigh ideas thoughtfully—it would be fun to have the whole school see our play, but would small children really enjoy it, and should we take the time to repeat it so often; it sounds like a good idea to build our map out of clay, but what about the school custodian; can we have a pet in our room if no one can take care of it over the week end; writing thank-you notes does take time, but shouldn't we be polite anyway? Children also have to learn that certain areas do not call for much discussion—as members of a law-abiding school community, we do not vote on a fire drill, or a special request from the principal's office, or a plan agreed

upon for the benefit of all classes; teachers have certain delegated responsibilities as members of a school faculty and merit cooperation in carrying them out; facts in books may be checked, but when facts are available, personal opinions that happen to disagree do not take up group time. Group planning is a skill; it does not develop without work.

Planning sessions are more effective when there is skillful use of preceding decisions. Every activity need not be talked through again every day. Once a decision has been made the new planning problem is to see whether there are any difficulties in carrying it out. Giving children a share in planning a daily schedule does not necessarily mean that every time allotment will have to be agreed upon over again every day. Certain time-blocks can be accepted by general agreement, and the key question for the day may be only, "Is there any need to make changes in our usual schedule?" It is helpful, also, to post plans. These may include lists of committees; special committee plans or problems raised for committee consideration, a calendar of special events; a proposed set of deadlines for a unit; a list of extra work activities to be picked up by individuals as soon as regular assignments have been completed; a series of assignments for special practice groups. Individual work-sheets have been mentioned as a means of helping each child to keep a list of his special errors or to check off work as he completes it. Teachers and children who plan together effectively check such lists; cross off work accomplished; star jobs of major importance; and devote their planning session to as efficient as possible a survey of where they are, and what needs to come next.

Grouping to Meet the Varied Needs of Independent Readers

Pupil-teacher planning is the key to the grouping problem. Techniques of effective grouping and scheduling are not easily separated. Just as joint planning makes it possible for children to work under a complex schedule, so it is a major factor in helping them engage in two or three kinds of reading activities in as many different groups.

Planning sessions help to identify what groups are needed; to determine what their special responsibilities are to be; and to decide upon personnel. Among useful planning techniques is that of helping children analyze their own reading needs. Out of such discussions can come agreements as to the desirability of joining a special practice group; the importance of working with a reading group that

is being given special help with informational reading; or the value of going on with individual work-type activities. Children who know their own strengths and weaknesses can also be more effective in selecting materials that are within their abilities. Group work proceeds more easily when time is taken to get group plans clear, lists of questions to be answered set up, individual responsibilities agreed upon, and ways of working decided. Written memoranda of plans posted, where all may check, have been mentioned as a way of facilitating the planning process. Periodic evaluation sessions help to check on group progress and to identify problems. All such techniques help to free children to work ahead in many different group situations, or to adjust easily to a change in the method of grouping.

Flexibility in grouping is considered essential. In the situations that have been described, no one method of grouping governs all activities. Time is saved, and help made more direct, by using the group appropriate to the particular problem. Children with similar ability work together frequently for unit activities in reading, and, at times, for activities in connection with units in the content fields. However, this grouping is not always followed. Among other possibilities that have been suggested are: Working with the class as a whole when a reading problem is common to the whole group, grouping children according to interest or friendship and adjusting the difficulty of the materials to be read accordingly; grouping children according to interest and assigning good readers to be special helpers; keeping together one group of children who need special help while others are grouped according to interest; breaking larger groups of like ability into pairs or sub groups in order to concentrate on parts of a group plan; selecting from children who would normally work in different groups a special practice group to work on a common difficulty; providing individualized work-type activities for a child with a particular problem. In these settings the particular need and the most efficient way of meeting it determine the group.

Independent reading activities are seen as an important source of increased skill. Varied activities are possible in the classrooms that have been described, in part because teachers value independent reading as a source of reading experience. Reading activities are not set up so that children work entirely under teacher guidance, or entirely in groups. While the teacher works with one group, or even gives help in an area unrelated to reading, other children go ahead with reading activities. Possibilities for independent work are found in recreational reading; in looking up information needed for unit

activities in the various content fields; in doing the research back of a reading unit that culminates in a play or a series of reports; or in reading independently at home to locate information for various classroom projects. Stimulation for independent reading is provided in the classroom by posting group plans; lists of questions; schedules of special events; directions for construction work; and creative stories, articles, or poems. Other types of independent reading are encouraged as children use their textbooks in other skill areas as reference books—looking up the correct form for a business letter; checking the dictionary for the meaning, spelling, or pronunciation of a word; or reviewing the explanation of an arithmetic process. Children also go ahead with work-type practice activities at their own paces, help each other in small groups, and prepare reports independently for the teacher's final approval.

When children work independently, the teacher has more opportunities to individualize her help. Part of this help is given during the independent work period already mentioned as a useful scheduling possibility, but individualized help can also be given during other activities when children are carrying out agreed-upon plans. While a group working on a reading unit is reading silently, the teacher may work with one child at a time. A few minutes' individual help can also be given while information is being collected for an experience unit in a content field. Recreational-reading periods also provide time to talk with children one at a time.

To encourage children to share in responsibility for analyzing their own strengths and weaknesses, for developing their own skills, for deciding on their own sources of recreational reading, and for locating and evaluating the informational material they read is not to neglect them. This is the responsibility which mature adults will have to take in a society that looks for effective independent thinking and cooperative action for the common good. Children have the right to be helped to take as many steps in the direction of independent activity as they are capable

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING THE READING EXPERIENCES PROVIDED IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

Are children being encouraged to use reading in many types of comprehensive and challenging activities?

Are there opportunities for extensive independent reading?

Do the children's reading experiences call for a wide variety of reading skills?

Is instruction and practice provided for groups and for individuals in terms of the specific reading problems they are facing?

Is the scheduling of reading activities flexible enough to allow for many types of experiences?

Is the pattern of grouping flexible in terms of the needs of the particular problem as well as the abilities of the children?

Are children encouraged to share in planning their activities?

Are reading activities planned so that the teacher is free to give help to individuals or to small groups?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Overviews of the Reading Program for the Intermediate Grades

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Gray, William S., Editor. *Improving Reading in All Curriculum Areas*, pp. 32–36. Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 76. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, November, 1952. Pp. viii + 262.

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CHAPTER XI

DEVELOPING READING SKILLS THROUGH ON-GOING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

IN THE reading program outlined in the preceding chapter, the functional use of reading in a wide variety of classroom activities is seen as making an important contribution to growth in reading skill—through the motivation for effective reading it provides, the new reading problems it raises, and the amount of meaningful practice it offers. In developing these activities the teacher's part is important. She must be able to provide new opportunities to read, to give children a part in planning for new reading experiences, to sense when practice on new skills is needed, and to coordinate the various reading experiences in her classroom. Specific problems of scheduling and grouping, and the general interrelationships among the child's varied reading experiences have been discussed. How can the reading activities suggested in the preceding chapter be developed so that there is maximum growth in reading skills, interests, and attitudes?

The present chapter is concerned with suggestions for the effective development of the unit activities and of the independent reading activities which are at the heart of the functional use of reading in the modern classroom.[1] Chapter XII suggests practice activities that can be used for individuals or groups needing additional planned experiences focussed on specific skills.

1 Variations of many of the unit activities described in this chapter were carried out by the intermediate-grade cooperating teachers and student teachers with whom the writer works. Because more than one version of the same activity was seen in a number of cases, specific footnote credit is not given except where material written with children is quoted.

PROVIDING READING MATERIAL FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

Teachers in the intermediate grades face even greater problems in supplying classroom reading materials than do teachers of younger children. It is difficult to provide situations calling for varied reading skills if the reading-matter in the classroom is overly restricted, either in level of difficulty or in scope. Sets of basal readers are very useful. However, these materials alone present only a limited number of the wide range of reading problems with which the maturing reader should be learning to cope. Many of the suggestions in Chapter VI for equipping a primary classroom with a variety of reading materials are also appropriate for the intermediate grades.

Variety in style and content is important. Since one of the characteristics of the skilled reader is his ability to adjust his method of reading to the type of reading-matter he is using, the intermediate grade child needs to work with many different writing styles and formats of books. While it is possible to teach a child to adjust his reading techniques by helping him to vary the purpose for which he reads, the process is facilitated when the material to which he turns poses a new reading problem.

Basal readers, especially if ten to a dozen copies of several sets are available, help to provide this variety. Typically, the readers designed for the intermediate grades contain materials such as informational articles, fictional stories that are factually accurate, fanciful or humorous stories, plays, and poetry. They are planned to widen the child's reading interests. Stories of other lands, folk tales, stories about animals, transportation, invention, and other topics of common interest are included. It is often possible to extend still further the variety of experiences offered in basal readers by selecting series that supplement each other. Certain of these books contain a relatively heavy amount of informational material. Others lean toward the more imaginative type of story. A few are planned so that a continuous story is developed around the experiences of the same characters.

Textbooks in the content fields help to widen experiences with differing formats: differing styles of presenting informational material; and maps, graphs, and other visual aids. When these books make their greatest contribution to the reading program, they, too, are provided in several sets, so that children may have such experiences as learning to locate information in several books, adjusting to more than one style of writing, and summarizing information from

several sources. This variety is particularly important in fields such as the social and natural sciences where the questions raised as a unit of work unfolds usually call for more information than can be found in one book. Even in the development of skills, such as correct English usage, or new number concepts, it is often helpful to have more than one resource. In some classrooms, where children's reading ability is limited and the available textbooks seem particularly difficult, teachers may prefer to have a sufficient number of copies of at least one text in each content field to allow the entire class to work together on common reading problems. When this is the case, a systematic effort is made to supply smaller numbers of supplementary texts.

Experiences with such common resource materials as dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, and almanacs are most easily given when copies are located permanently in the classroom. When funds are limited, variety can be provided for the school as a whole by purchasing one set of each of several standard children's reference texts and then making arrangements whereby the books may be borrowed from the classroom to which they are allocated. Older children also need to learn to use fictional material which has an authentic factual base. In some content fields the information most readily available to the poor reader may be found in such stories, either in basal readers or in easy fiction. Even for more skilled readers, some of the clearest and most detailed pictures of the lives of people of other lands or times are in materials of this sort. Teachers typically build or borrow collections of such books much as they develop a library for recreational reading. Many classes also have children's weekly newspapers or magazines available. In addition, more use can be made of the information in newspapers and in adult magazines than is possible with primary children. Classroom bulletin boards are often the means of sharing such information.

Variety is also important in the type of recreational reading provided. If the skilled reader is to be encouraged to expand his interests to many types of fiction, to biography, to informational materials, and to poetry as well as prose, the classroom library must be extensive. School and community libraries too, will be used even more heavily than they are in the primary grades.

Providing full length books and different types of reference materials in the classroom library does more than help children develop ability to work with varying styles and formats. It also makes possible

experience in reading materials of different lengths. The adult reader may peruse an entire book for pleasure, search through several chapters in two or three books to locate needed information, or read one short article with care. Children at the intermediate-grade level need to be encouraged to undertake such varied reading tasks.

Range in difficulty needs to be considered. The problem of choosing materials to provide for four or more grade levels persists into the intermediate grades. With the numbers of basal-reader series now available, intermediate-grade teachers will find it as easy as it is at the primary level to plan for this range in ability without undesirable duplication of materials. Some primary materials, preferably those unused in the first three grades, are likely to be needed in the fourth grade, and often in the fifth. Provision also needs to be made for those children who are reading beyond their actual grade placement.

Providing materials in the content fields to meet the needs of children of several levels of ability is sometimes difficult. While it is as important to challenge the able reader as it is to adjust to the reading level of the retarded child, the problem often resolves itself into the practical one of locating simple materials for the poor reader, since the more able youngster has a wide variety of supplementary reading available to him. Most teachers examine new materials in the content fields with an eye to adding those most simply written to the classroom collection. There are also available a certain number of pamphlet materials on specific topics, geared to the less skillful reader. Occasionally a book with excellent pictures is helpful, even though the context is difficult. Separate stories in basal readers often provide another source of easy materials for the intermediate-grade child, just as they do for younger children. Easy fictional materials which have an authentic factual basis may also help. In addition, many intermediate grade teachers prepare experience records with their children in a fashion similar to that of the primary grades. Some of these can well be mimeographed and saved. It is also possible to use the technique suggested for primary teachers of rebinding in colorful paper selected chapters of up-to-date information from worn out textbooks destined for disposal. These provide short selections for the child who reads slowly. Articles in children's magazines can be clipped and re-used. Intermediate teachers often find that they have even greater need than do primary teachers for card index files indicating the location and contents of available books, pamphlets, and articles,

and containing special annotations regarding the reading difficulty of the material.

It is just as important as it is in the primary grades to make sure that all children have some experiences with easy books. At the intermediate level, certain techniques assume new importance. adapting reading speed to varied purposes; reading aloud to hold an audience, and taking notes, outlining, and summarizing. The development of these skills is facilitated by the use of relatively easy materials in which vocabulary, sentence structure, and format are well within the child's grasp. Even the full enjoyment of recreational reading may be lost if a book is too hard. In a well-equipped classroom, then, many of the materials that the child reads for enjoyment or uses for the development of special reference skills should be easier than those with which he is working to develop a stock of new words or to polish his comprehension skills.

Various methods can be used for estimating the difficulty level of reading materials. A number of statistical formulae for predicting the readability of materials have been developed.[2] Sentence length, number of unfamiliar or hard words, and number of prepositional or qualifying phrases are among the items frequently tallied in these devices The classroom teacher can often make a general estimate of the difficulty level of a book by comparing its style with that of two or three basal readers. Sometimes the compactness of the writing gives a clue to difficulty. The shortest statement is not always the easiest Illustrations, analogies, and descriptions often help to make meanings clear. The difficulty of the vocabulary can be judged in part by lists available today. The most widely known of these lists are included in the suggested readings at the end of this chapter. Some appraisal also needs to be made of the concepts being developed. Very simple words can sometimes be used to express an idea that is well beyond children's understanding. Even the format of a book can influence a reader's general impression of its difficulty. Few illustrations, fine print, long chapters or paragraphs, and few section and paragraph headings may all make a book seem hard to read.

TEACHING READING THROUGH UNIT ACTIVITIES

In Chapter X, two general types of units were identified in which reading interests, attitudes, or skills play a major part. The first is

2 Edgar Dale, Editor; *Readability* A publication of the Conference on Research in English Chicago National Council of Teachers of English, 1949

the unit developed around varied interests in books and stories, where children explore different types of stories in basal readers, dramatize, read aloud to other groups, or expand their interests in recreational reading. The second is the unit in a content field where reading skills are important as children locate information, read reference materials, interpret graphs and other visual aids, and make appropriate notes and summaries. The discussion in this section is centered around ways of developing reading skills through these two types of units. Because the reading materials of the content fields are likely to pose certain special problems regardless of the focus of the particular unit, a third topic has been included in this section to suggest ways in which these problems can be met as the reading activities in connection with the unit are developed.

The general steps in developing unit activities have been outlined at several points in preceding chapters. The essential characteristic of any unit of work is the unified nature of its experiences in terms of plans understood and agreed upon by the children concerned. Work in creative art may be part of the unit; exhibits and bulletin board displays may be prepared; various kinds of committee responsibilities may be delegated; but the element that distinguishes a series of activities as a unit is the underlying set of plans that gives them meaning and continuity for the children. What types of reading experiences might be developed as these plans unfold?

Building Reading Units Around Story Materials

Develop activities around single stories in unit fashion. A reading unit need not always cover a large amount of material. Individual stories in basal readers lend themselves to many types of unit activities. Children can be helped to plan so that the variety offered by these materials is capitalized upon. Humorous stories often lend themselves to oral reading. A story may be identified as having to do with a phase of natural history unfamiliar to the group and read with careful attention to detail. A description of pioneer life may be read for information bearing on a social-studies unit. Other stories may be read just for the fun of enjoying a new and interesting tale. With immature readers, the techniques used to guide the reading of the story and the development of follow-up activities may be similar to those suggested in Chapter VII for working with primary children. More skilled readers should be able to undertake more extensive independent reading.

When a single story is involved, the culmination of the unit is often merely a lively group discussion developed in terms of the original purposes for which the story was read. Favorites, or particularly interesting stories, may be shared with other groups through brief projects. Pictures tracing the plot of a story and appropriately captioned may be posted on a bulletin board. Children may tell other groups the gist of the story, possibly using their own illustrations. Various types of oral-reading and dramatic presentations are possible. Children share in the development of these relatively simple unit activities by contributing to the preliminary discussion of the story that clarifies the purposes for which it might be read, by taking part in the discussion following the reading of the story, and by helping to decide whether it should be shared and how this might be done to best advantage.

Make use of the grouping of stories in basal readers. A set of stories centering around a topic in a basal reader offers more opportunities for varied activities than a single story because there is more material from which to choose. These books were planned with possibilities for unit activities in mind, and teachers will find many suggestions for interesting activities in the accompanying manuals. Children in one group, who read a series of stories about famous inventions, prepared a bulletin-board display, each child depicting the invention he thought the most interesting. In another group the children dramatized the lives of famous people about whom they had been reading. Individuals and small groups in another class constructed dioramas in shoe boxes to illustrate scenes in stories they liked best. Reading a number of fanciful tales led another group into creative writing. The stories that resulted were shared both with other group members and with the class as a whole. Another group found a series of stories bearing on its work in social studies. Each child chose a piece of important information from his story, drew a picture to illustrate it, and wrote out a short summary report. These were then presented to the rest of the class.

All children need not read all stories in a unit. Each child may select one and be responsible for telling the rest of the group about it. Pairs of children may work together on a story. When everyone reads every story it need not always be in a reading-group situation with the teacher as guide. As suggested in the discussion of scheduling in Chapter X, children may work independently for a day or two and then come together to discuss their reading. Stories need not be

discussed one at a time. The unit as a whole may be the center of discussion—stories may be compared; interesting elements may be highlighted; different writing styles may be examined.

As indicated in Chapter X, the amount of teacher guidance will depend upon the difficulty of the material and the ability of the group. In one fourth grade, where the children decided to keep up-to-date bulletin-board displays about stories they liked, the teacher worked rather closely with the group. Typically, these children, who were still having trouble with unfamiliar words, read each of the stories in the unit in the basal reader in a group session with the teacher leading the discussion. When all the stories in the unit had been read, the children decided what type of display would be most appropriate for the bulletin board. At times it was a series of illustrations for a single story; at times individuals chose key scenes from each story: and at others the children planned for a summary of special information they felt was important. On some occasions, when the proposed display was relatively simple, the children worked independently. On others, when plans called for accurate summaries of information or for an outline of a complicated plot, the teacher gave more guidance.

In a sixth-grade class, where most of the children were skillful readers, there was unanimous agreement that they wanted time to read for fun. Accordingly, units on folk tales, humorous stories, and fanciful tales were located in several sets of fifth- and sixth-grade basal readers. The children proposed that each group choose the story it liked the best and plan some way to share it with the rest of the class. The next several days were given over to silent reading. Group discussions of the stories followed, and planning sessions about how to present them. This unit called for little direct supervision. The teacher was free to work with groups when she was needed, but spent relatively more time with the individual children whose reading skill was the most limited. The resulting presentations made use of a variety of oral-reading and dramatization procedures.

Extend activities from basal readers to supplementary materials. Units calling for wide reading often develop out of activities that begin with a collection of stories in a basal reader. One group, which read a story about ocean life, next turned to the encyclopedia to find more information. Enthusiasm for a special author's story in a basal reader led another group to the library to find some of his books and to report on them to the rest of the class. A group of boys who started with some stories on science and invention ended by combing the library for books on airplanes. It is often possible to locate in a second

basal reader additional stories about a topic of interest to a group. Manuals to most basal-reader series offer suggestions for such related reading experiences.

One rather elaborate unit calling for supplementary reading was developed in a fifth grade. It started with some basal-reader stories about wild animals. The children read these together, discussing each story with special attention to animals that were unfamiliar to them. Then they planned a trip to the Zoo to see some of the animals for themselves. In preparation for this, individuals and small groups looked up other information about animals of particular interest to them. On their return there was more reading of supplementary materials as they checked on what they had seen and looked up answers to new questions. The teacher and the librarian helped to supply materials of varied levels of difficulty, and the encyclopedia came in for considerable use. The end product was a series of pictures and an imaginary trip to the Zoo, to which the fourth grade was invited. Each child stood near the pictures of the animals of particular interest to him and reported what he had learned about them as the guide directed the visitors' attention from place to place.

Capitalize on possibilities for entertaining others. Plans to entertain other groups can lead to units calling for many types of oral-reading presentations. Make-believe radio or television performances can be used. Pantomime or dramatization can be planned so that the narrators read aloud. Oral reports can be used to share books, stories, or information. Poems can become the basis for choral-speaking activities. Special events during the school year often lend themselves to oral-reading activities. All groups may read stories about holidays and share the ones they consider the most interesting in a special program. Class parties at such times as Christmas, Hallowe'en, or Valentine's Day can be devoted, in part, to reading special stories or poems. In such activities, each reading group may contribute from stories at its own reading level, chosen to fit into the general class plans

Oral-reading skill does not develop by accident. The mature readers of the intermediate grades are better equipped to learn to read aloud than are the children of the primary grades. Suggestions of ways of providing for special practice in reading both poetry and prose are given in the section on oral reading in Chapter XII. In the units described in this section, procedures such as those discussed in that chapter need to be assumed as part of the preparatory activities.

Children in one class invited their mothers to lunch and planned

their program around *How We Learn to Read*. One group showed the reference materials with which the classroom was equipped. A second demonstrated how group oral reading of a story could be worked out. Three children planned some choral reading of poetry. The children who were having the most difficulty learning to read demonstrated some of the games they used to learn hard words. Library books formed the centerpieces on the luncheon tables. In another class, plans to interpret the reading program to parents were developed by thinking, first, of all the kinds of stories that had been read during the school year. Classifications such as pioneer stories, adventure stories, and nature stories were suggested. Several children made particular mention of the poems they had enjoyed and volunteered to work with them. The children then broke into eight groups, each to present one type of material. The group work that followed consisted of choosing a typical story, rereading it to be sure of its details, and then deciding how best to present it to parents. Class planning sessions were used to evaluate the plans of individual groups and to make sure that varied ways of working were demonstrated. The resulting program consisted of several types of oral reading, reporting with pictures, dramatization, and choral speaking. The children also talked through what they thought they were learning about how to read, and the members of each group were prepared to tell a little about how they worked and the skills they thought they had developed.

One fifth grade decided to send Christmas greetings to other classes by way of a tape recording. The children selected one or two favorite poems, a story they particularly liked, and some Christmas songs. As an introduction they wrote out their own Christmas greetings. After several rehearsals for continuity, the entire performance was recorded. It was then shared with children in other intermediate grades, and the result was particularly gratifying in that interest in oral reading began to spread.

In a sixth grade, the children planned for their part in a school-wide program celebrating the growth of their state by reading all they could find about its early history. Then, with their stories of famous people and events well in hand, they invited small groups from other classes to take turns joining story groups. A visitor to the school during the week this took place found, scattered through the halls, knots of younger children grouped around two or three sixth-graders, listening and asking questions.

In one unit in which teacher guidance was quite detailed, a group

of children of limited reading skill planned to present a story to the rest of the class as a television drama. The story in the basal reader was read originally just because it looked interesting. The discussion that followed the first reading traced the plot and gave individuals an opportunity to express their reactions to the story as a whole. In the course of the discussion someone said it would make a good play, and someone else added, "We could make it look like television." Over the next several days the plans were worked out. In these planning sessions the teacher worked closely with the children. Careful rereading for details was necessary in order to decide on the characters and the specifics of the action. Ability to outline was needed as scenes were set up. Skill in following the general gist of the story was required in order to eliminate unnecessary action without spoiling the plot. Conversation was finally rewritten to suit the production as planned, and pasted to the back of the box serving as the television set, so that the actors could do some reading of their parts. Oral-reading experience was provided for the announcer by writing out his part. Skill in reading aloud was developed in practice sessions in which group members helped to criticize each other's performances. The stage setting for the final presentation was a large cardboard box, cut and colored to look like a television set. By sitting on a piano bench, the actors were able to arrange themselves so that their heads appeared in the opening cut for the screen.

Develop units around recreational reading. Profitable units can be developed around recreational reading. Some of these may be organized simply; others may call for rather elaborate plans which may include sharing the results of the reading with other classes or with other reading groups within the one class.

The most skillful readers in one class developed a three weeks' unit around biographies of American heroes and heroines. This came parallel with a social-studies unit centering around early American history. The teacher's first step was to collect appropriate books. Among these were several of the *Landmark Books;*[3] a number from the *Signature Series;*[4] *Jane Addams*[5] and *Lou Gehrig*[6] from the *Childhood of Famous Americans Series; Daniel Boone;*[7] *Clara Bar-*

[3] Published by Random House, Inc.

[4] Published by Grosset and Dunlap, Inc.

[5] Jean Brown Wagoner, *Jane Addams Little Lame Girl* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944.

[6] Guernsey Van Riper, Jr., *Lou Gehrig Boy of the Sand Lots.* Indianapolis Bobbs Merrill Company, 1949.

[7] James Daugherty, *Daniel Boone* New York Viking Press, Inc., 1939.

ton;[8] *Dr. George Washington Carver;*[9] and lives of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, and other presidents.

Next the teacher told the children a little about some of the books. There was general agreement that it would be interesting to read such books, and to report on the lives of famous Americans to the rest of the class. After the children had an opportunity to examine the books and to hear a little about some of the less familiar personalities, each child chose his book. Because these children were capable independent readers, the teacher's main responsibility while the books were being read was to check on progress, to help the few children who were not happy with their first choices, and to plan for enough discussion with individual children to be sure no one was skimming too rapidly for adequate comprehension. For the most part, during this independent reading period, the teacher's time was spent helping less able groups work on other projects. When the time came to prepare reports, more of the teacher's time was spent with the biography group. For the group who originated the unit, it concluded with the reports to the class, but biography continued to be a favorite type of recreational reading for the entire class for the remainder of the year.

An elaborate recreational-reading unit involving much independent reading was developed by a fifth grade who planned a book fair designed to acquaint mothers with the possibilities of books for Christmas gifts. In the first planning sessions, led by the teacher, the children listed the type of books they liked to read and identified some of their favorite authors. Then they divided into groups, each group to locate more materials in its area of special interest. The teacher and the librarian were needed at this point in order to reduce the amount of time spent in the mechanics of locating books. Once a representative selection of books was made, each child read as many of those appropriate to his interest group as he could. By apportioning the reading, the children in each group were able to become acquainted with almost all the books they planned to display. The teacher's help during this part of the unit went to those children who were the poorer readers. In planning the fair, each group decorated and manned its own booth. Favorite authors were given special advertising. Peep shows were used in some cases to illustrate scenes from the books. The children in one group made their own illustrations

[8] Mildred Pace, *Clara Barton.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941.

[9] Shirley Graham and George R. Lipscomb, *Dr. George Washington Carver.* New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1944.

of their favorite books and used the darkened stage to give a magic lantern show, telling the stories of the books as they showed the pictures. The mystery-story group borrowed some specimen bones from the science teacher for atmosphere and the war-story group brought to school various souvenirs brought home by fathers and older brothers. Each child was prepared to answer questions about the books on display in his booth. Mimeographed lists provided parents and other children with a permanent record of the books recommended.

In a school with limited library facilities the children developed a unit around library books brought from home, and worked out ways of calling new books to the attention of the class, protecting the books from injury, and cataloging them so that they could be easily located. All of the books that came in were not of equal literary value, and time was taken as the year went on to discuss well-liked books and to build standards.

Another class began a recreational-reading unit with a discussion of why the children liked to read comic books. Out of the list of things they liked about comic books came a discussion of whether library books provided the same sorts of satisfactions. As various children began to name library books they had particularly enjoyed, it became apparent to others that many books were just as exciting as comic books and provided much more reading. The next step was to work with the librarian to make a larger selection of library books available for classroom use.[10] Reading activities for the next two weeks were devoted to independent recreational reading and to group discussions to tell about new finds. From this point, classroom activities were turned to other types of reading, but independent reading went on.

Help children become conscious of reading skills as they work. Teaching reading calls for developing better skills as well as for encouraging positive interests and attitudes toward reading. In part, this increased skill comes because of the amount of purposeful practice provided through units such as those that have just been described. It is also important to plan specifically to help children become sensitive to the techniques they need and conscious of working to develop them.

[10] Excellent help on the problem of comic books can be found in Constance Carr, "Coping with Comics." *Adventuring in Literature with Children*, Leaflet No. 12. Bulletin No. 92 of the Association for Childhood Education International. Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1953.

For many children a certain amount of practice in developing specific skills will need to be planned through special work-type activities. These are discussed in Chapter XII. Specific help with reading techniques can also come at many points in a unit. Part of the preliminary plans for reading should include some consideration of how to read. "We have four stories to read. Suppose we read them quickly first to see what they are like." "If you think this would be a good story to dramatize, what could you watch for as you read to be sure you are right?" "If you're going to share your favorite story with the rest of us, how could you get some extra practice in reading it aloud?" "It takes time to read a whole library book. How could you tell quickly if it is one you might like?" The periods when children are reading independently offer time to work on skills with individuals. Group sharing of what has been read, or discussion of how preliminary plans are working out can lead to other opportunities to discuss reading difficulties. Inability to report the gist of a story may call for help on how to note important points. Inaccurate or sparse details may call for discussion of techniques of accurate reading. Plans to share a reading activity with the rest of the class can lead to special attention to many skills as children analyze each other's oral-reading performances, check on the accuracy of details in pictures, or argue about characterizations for dramatization purposes. Whenever a problem arises in the development of a unit, in other words, there is a possibility of helping children focus their attention on reading skills.

The amount of help provided, and to some extent the variety of reading skills developed, will depend on the teacher's insight into the possibilities inherent in the activities under way. The following suggest typical activities that call for specific types of skills. These may serve as a guide in analyzing children's strengths and weaknesses and in providing for additional experiences.

Critical evaluation is called for in: Discussing the merits of an individual story; comparing a group of stories; discussing the styles and purposes of various types of materials; distinguishing between factual and fictional materials; identifying favorite authors and locating other books by them; checking the information in a basal reader against follow-up reading in reference texts; sharing favorite library books; deciding which of a group of books to recommend to other children; deciding on appropriate materials to share with another class; deciding which of several stories would make the best dramatization or oral presentation.

Reading for the general gist of the story is called for in: Doing a first reading for the sense of the story; surveying a group of stories to decide which one to read; deciding whether a story is appropriate for oral reading or dramatization; rereading to locate a statement needed to prove a specific point; outlining a story for purposes of illustrating or dramatizing; skimming a group of library books in order to decide which one to read.

Reading with careful attention to details is needed for: Defending one's opinion about a story; drawing a picture correct in its details for the bulletin board, locating details of costumes and characterization for a dramatization; locating specific words or phrases which provide humor or color in the story, discussing the information contained in a factual article; presenting a series of reports to other class members.

Adjustments of reading speed are needed in: Doing a rapid first reading for the general gist of a story; rereading to locate a disputed point; reading carefully for the details needed for a series of reports or pictures, examining several library books rapidly in order to decide which one to read, reading a story with care to decide which points to include in an oral-reading presentation.

Oral-reading experiences are afforded through: Reading parts of one's favorite story to other members of one's reading group; reading the part of the story that substantiates an opinion; reading a story to the rest of the class, planning a dramatic presentation of a story through pantomime, a play, a radio broadcast, a television show; reading captions of pictures aloud in sharing a bulletin board display; reading to other groups summaries of factual information developed from a story; presenting choral speaking or oral reading of favorite poems to other groups

New vocabulary is developed through: Becoming acquainted with new non-technical words; learning to pronounce new place names and names of persons; learning new technical terms in informational materials, studying an author's style to decide how his choice of words helps to convey humor, description, or suspense.

Reference techniques are needed for: Locating a story on a given topic in a basal reader, locating further information in a supplementary reference text, locating library books on a given topic, becoming acquainted with authors and illustrators; locating parallel topics in other basal readers; outlining or summarizing information to be shared with other groups; looking up new terms in a dictionary or textbook glossary.

Broad interests in reading are developed through. Selecting one's favorite story; working with groups of stories representing different types of literature; exploring library books; identifying the works of favorite authors, sharing reading interests with others in a recreational-reading unit; deciding which stories to share with other reading groups; enjoying the reports of other groups on their reading interests; discussing the moods of poems as bases for oral reading or choral speaking.

Developing the Reading Experiences Related to Unit Activities in the Content Fields

Encourage wide independent reading. Unit activities in the content fields make one of their most important contributions, both to reading skill and to growing ability to solve problems, through the opportunities they offer to encourage children to read as widely as their level of reading ability and the materials available will allow.

In a fourth grade, a unit was developed around interest in how we travel today. Preliminary discussion indicated that most of the children had been on motor trips, that a number had ridden on busses, that four or five had been on a train, and that one child had been on an airplane. When the teacher raised questions about how food and other products reached the community, trucks and boats were added to the list of means of transportation. As the children talked about their experiences, questions and areas in which more information would be helpful began to appear. "Why do people ship things in trucks instead of using trains?" "What kinds of trucks go by the school?" "Where are they going?" "Can you go to bed in an airplane the way you do on a train?" "How long a trip would you have to take before you would need to go to bed in an airplane?" "What would it be like to travel in a boat?" "Were there ever passenger boats on our river?" "How did people get out to this country before there were any trains or busses?"

These questions and others like them were eventually classified according to the means of transportation involved, and the children divided into groups according to the special mode of conveyance in which they were most interested. In all, five groups were set up--trains, cars and busses, trucks, planes, and boats. This provided a simple class organization that made it possible for the teacher to give considerable time to each of the groups, yet it did not result in groups so large that the children, who were inexperienced in group work, had trouble working cooperatively. It was agreed that each group would try to answer the questions raised by the class about its area of special interest, and that any new information would also be reported. Since there was interest in early modes of travel, all groups decided to watch for historical backgrounds.

These children used a wide variety of resources. There were a number of children's books about planes, trains, and boats. There were also pamphlet materials written specially for children. Many of

these contained excellent pictures. Stories in basal readers provided both current information and historical background. Social-studies textbooks gave additional information about early ways of travel. Pamphlets, time-tables, pictures, and a few maps were secured by writing to selected railroads and airlines. Some current information about air power was secured from the local paper, and some pictures of planes and boats from travel magazines that the children found at home. Special information learned through excursions was summarized on experience records.

In this unit the children did much more than read. As a class they took trips to the railroad station, to the bus terminal, and to the airport. During three consecutive recess periods the group interested in trucks noted the names of all the trucks that came past the school and ended with a comprehensive list of the ways in which trucks served the community. The visual aids department of the school system was able to supply a number of motion pictures, slides, and still pictures. Some simple science experiments were used to demonstrate why boats float and how an airplane can keep up in the air. Quite a collection of models was developed from toys children brought to school. One of the fathers had been a pilot and came to tell more about planes. Another was connected with the railway and helped to answer questions about trains. The teacher had several good sets of pictures which he added to the bulletin-board displays. The art teacher helped the children develop a mural depicting the history of transportation.

Group work in reading was planned as one part of the total unit activities. Some general reading for background was done by the class as a whole. Then, for several days, group reading activities were the only planned reading experiences. The teacher was able to meet with each group to give help in locating information and in deciding what to include in each final report. Plans were laid so that the group reports added new information, but did not duplicate what had already been secured through some other means. Since these children were relatively inexperienced in the preparation of group reports, the teacher took time to hear the plans for each report and to act as a critic of the report in its final form. The final group reports were presented in a simple panel discussion in which each child told something special his group had learned. The teacher served as discussion leader to help to pull together all the information that had been secured about each means of transportation. Each group also prepared

a notebook of pictures and interesting information regarding its topic. These were put on the library table for other groups to read. As a final check, each group supplied four key questions about its special topic, to be used as part of an oral quiz session.

In the early fall in a fifth grade, a unit developed out of children's reports about where they had been on summer vacations. Out of the discussion came the proposal that it would be good to know more about different parts of the country. It was suggested that groups take imaginary trips and prepare diaries of what they would see. Since this was a unit designed to develop general acquaintance with different sections of the country, many of which were designated by the course of study for more careful attention during the year, the children were helped to raise the kinds of questions a tourist might raise. "What kind of clothing would you need?" "How many miles would you travel?" "What cities would you visit?" "What kind of land would you see—farms, trees, hills, mountains, deserts?" "Would you see points of historical interest?" "What industries would you notice?" Arithmetic became an important part of this unit as children calculated the cost of their proposed trips and estimated mileage. Written language experiences were many as they prepared their group diaries.

Because the children in this class were able readers and not likely to need step-by-step supervision, many small groups formed. Two children with special interests worked alone. The teacher helped to lay original plans with the class as a whole, used evaluation periods to check on group progress, kept an eye on the groups as she circulated among them, and gave help when she was asked, but she did not attempt to give close supervision to each step of the group work.

The reading-matter for this unit included several sets of social studies textbooks, materials secured by writing to Chambers of Commerce in various cities, road maps, advertising materials from airlines, bulletins and booklets about national parks, and articles in travel magazines. The teacher had a materials file which yielded a number of special pamphlets, pictures, and clippings. Atlases were consulted for information about locations of cities and populations. Motion pictures, slides, postcards, and sets of pictures helped to supply additional information. The children also interviewed parents and friends who had travelled to the localities in which they were interested.

As a culmination of this unit, each group summarized the con-



D Antl t Br ker

Dramatizing a basal reader story calls for many reading skills. With the plans they helped to write posted for easy reference some members of the group reread for the plot while others make sure the props are right. Courtesy of the Cincinnati Public Schools



D. Arthur Brucker

Many sources of information are tapped in a unit of work. Reference techniques are important if full use is to be made of books; but maps, pictures, and concrete objects have to be "read" with equal skill. (Copyright 1951, Board of Education, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

tents of its diary, using pictures and maps to help clarify the report. The complete diaries, which contained maps and pictures and many additional details, were then placed on display for other groups to examine and to read.

In a sixth grade, the children embarked upon a science unit to study modern means of communication. Firsthand experiences were very important in this unit. With the teacher's help the children set up a simple telegraph key and sounder, and a simple electric telephone. They also used other types of equipment to learn about batteries, switches, and magnetic fields. Trips to the local radio and television stations helped to build a sense of the great complexity of modern means of communication. The telephone company provided booklets on good telephone techniques. It was also possible to visit the local telephone exchange. Several parents were able to supply more information. One group of boys, with the help of the teacher, went on after the unit was completed to build an amateur radio receiving set.

Since the science information in connection with this unit was unfamiliar to most of the children and required careful explanation and simplification, part of the reading was done by the class as a whole, using a set of science textbooks. The teacher led the discussion based on the reading and used various diagrams, models, and other visual aids to clarify concepts. Smaller groups then went on to do specific reading on simpler aspects of the telegraph, telephone, radio, and television. Their resources included a number of pamphlet materials, science textbooks, and children's books on electricity. Basal-reader stories helped to supply some of the historical background. Daily papers and magazines provided some up-to-date information on radio and television, particularly with regard to the less scientific aspects of sound effects, camera techniques, and proposed new developments. This unit was culminated with a program to which parents were invited. Each group told about its area of special interest, using science equipment to demonstrate underlying principles. Among other things, each group prepared a chart showing something of the historical development of its particular means of communication.

In each of these units wide reading played an important part. The teacher was at hand to explain, to lead discussions, to help to focus attention on important points, to challenge inaccurate information or inadequate concepts, and to provide new information. What the

children read helped to fill in background and to expand upon what they had seen and heard. The reading became more meaningful because it was supplemented by information from many other sources.[11]

Make adjustments to meet the needs of immature readers. Children of limited reading ability need not be deprived of the wide reading experiences that have just been described. There are a number of ways of adjusting the total reading task to varying levels of ability. Among the most important is the selection of material. Poorer readers need to have books well within their grasp. Second, it is possible to guide the preliminary discussion that raises questions, or outlines problem areas, or lays plans for securing needed information so that the reading task is made as specific as need be. Children of limited reading ability may, in some cases, read for only a few definite and clear details. Third, there can be variation in the amount of help given children in locating material. Less skilled readers may even be provided with exact page numbers. Fourth, the number of adjustments the child must make to differing types of materials and varied formats can be reduced by controlling the amount and variety of material provided for reference and the points at which new types of materials are introduced. Then, too, the type of planning and group activity that has been described makes it possible for a teacher to work intensively with poor readers without neglecting other children.

One fourth-grade teacher solved the problem of helping the immature readers in her class work on a science unit on rocks, developed out of interest in several collections made over the summer vacation, by bringing from the library books graded on three levels of difficulty. The sets of science texts in her room also varied in difficulty, although all were recommended for the fourth grade. In their preliminary discussion the children outlined the information they were most anxious to secure. The teacher helped them phrase their questions clearly, and posted the list in a corner of the bulletin board for easy reference. Then the books were distributed to the children, who worked in the same groups in which they would normally be placed for reading activities. Each group thus received materials adjusted to its own level. In the reading periods that followed, the teacher worked with each group in turn on the problem

[11] For descriptions of units in which children's reading skills are more limited, see Chapter VIII.

of how to read carefully for information. Since the children were reading different books, some of the time given to each group was spent helping them pool their information, and some was spent working with individual children. In this class all groups read to try to find answers to the same questions. As a result, the sharing period that drew the unit to a close called for oral reports from individuals and from groups but for no tightly organized committee activities.

For another fourth grade interested in birds, the teacher was able to find units in two sets of science textbooks in her classroom, and to borrow a simpler set from the third-grade teacher. The children were divided into groups according to reading ability, and each group read the book best suited to its reading level Since the points of emphasis differed from text to text, the children in each group took on the task of reporting what they had learned from their particular book. Because all the members of one group were reading the same text, the teacher was able to work with them just as she would with a group reading a basal reader story

In a fifth grade studying national parks, most of the children read about the park of their choice but the poorest readers were invited to join a special group preparing a report on Yosemite In this class there was a new problem for all children in learning to use pamphlet materials and in developing more skill in reading maps This help, together with assistance in deciding on the kind of information needed and how it was to be shared, was given to the class as a whole. From this point, the teacher used class planning and evaluation periods and short discussions with each of the groups of more skilled readers to clear up general problems, but devoted much of her time to working directly with the special group of poor readers while the others went ahead independently.

Another class of very limited reading ability partially solved its problem of handling difficult materials by planning definitely so that at least one good reader was placed in each small group It was his special job to help with hard words, and, if necessary, to read the material aloud while the others listened The teacher circulated to give extra help where needed, and at one point read a particularly difficult, but interesting, story to a group Armed with some very definite questions, the answers to which were quite clear in the various reference books, this class came out with a good set of notes in single-sentence statements. Short reports on what had been learned

during the reading period were made daily so that there was oral reinforcement of the reading.

Use experience records to supplement other reading materials. Experience records can play an important part in the reading activities of the intermediate grades. When materials are difficult to read or hard to locate, these records can be used to summarize children's reports of firsthand experiences and eventually to provide the class with some badly needed reading-matter. Occasionally the teacher may use an experience chart as a way of rewriting difficult materials for a group with limited reading ability. These charts also provide valuable experiences in following directions and reading carefully for details as they serve for records of class plans, lists of committees, lists of special questions to be answered, or suggestions of what groups might do to summarize their work.

An elaborate unit in which extensive use was made of the experience-chart type of recording was developed by the members of one fifth grade who, with their teacher, wrote their own history of their city.[12] This unit was unusually rich in the many types of firsthand experiences that supplemented the reading. There were a certain number of pamphlet materials and small booklets available for the children to read, and some additional adult materials for their teacher. These were used at various points in the unit to supplement other information. The children first discussed the kinds of information other classes might like to read in a history of their city. Then plans were laid to visit parts of the city about which the group knew very little, and to write to children in schools in other parts of the city to ask what their local communities were like. Historical sites and museums as well as modern businesses and community service agencies were visited. As trips were taken and other information came in, it was written in chart form—some by the class as a whole with the teacher acting as group secretary and some by groups of children. After the first writing, all participated in rereading and evaluating each record. Part of the evaluation consisted of checking to be sure that the words being used would be easy for other classes to read. Eventually the chapters of the book were brought together in typed form. Part of this unit was worked on intensively as the children studied their city and part was carried on as a parallel

[12] John F Stevenson, "A Social History of Cincinnati for Fifth Grade Children" Unpublished Master's Thesis Cincinnati, University of Cincinnati, 1952

experience in language while other topics were the center of the social studies discussions.

This same teacher and his children undertook a project in redecorating their classroom, and wrote their own series of arithmetic problems based on their activities. These charts, which were illustrated with the actual receipts, read as follows:

OUR DRAPES

We have new drapes in our room. We made them in order to have an attractive room. We also wanted to cut out the sun's brightness and fill the room with soft light.

We measured the windows. They are 24½ feet by 10 feet. We needed to get material bigger than that to allow for hems and pleats. This is what we bought.

a. Our material cost $1 for 3 yards. It cost $11.34. How much material was that?

b. The PTA gave us $5. How much more did the drapes cost?

c. We paid Mr. Stevenson $1.22 and 98 cents. How much did we pay all together?

d. How much did the teacher pay for the drapes?

The receipt for the material was given to the P.T.A. so they would know what we used their $5 gift for. Always ask for a receipt when you buy something. It is proof that you paid for your purchase.

The curtains are hung on traverse rods so they can be opened and closed with ease. A man came to measure the width of the window.

e. He said, "Your window is 7 yards 32½ inches wide." How many feet is that?

f. We have two traverse rods the same length. How many feet long is each rod?

Here is the receipt that came when the rods were delivered.

g. The rods cost $6.05. How much did each rod cost?

h. The tax was 18 cents. What was the total cost?

i. Next we bought 35 pin-on hooks for 25 cents. What was the cost of each hook? Here is the receipt.

j. We also needed 36 slides @ 3 cents each. What was the cost for all of them?

k. At the same time Mr. Stevenson bought two end fasteners for 60 cents a pair. The tax was 5 cents. What was the total cost for slides and end fasteners?

l. The cord cost 5 cents a yard. The bill was $2. How many yards was that?

m. The tax was 6 cents. What was the total cost?

n. We needed more material for the block print design at the bottom of our drapes. Mr. Stevenson bought 4 yards of muslin at 29 cents a yard. How much did it cost? Don't forget the 4 cents tax.

o. Do you think you can find the grand total cost of our drapes?

In another fifth grade, the children summarized their science activities in setting up a new aquarium in a parody of *The House that Jack Built.*[13]

THIS IS THE AQUARIUM THAT OUR CLASS MADE

This is the sand we washed so clean,
That we put in the aquarium that our class made.

This is the water, aged for a day,
That covers the sand we washed so clean,
That we put in the aquarium that our class made.

These are the plants that grow so green,
Giving oxygen to the water, aged for a day,
That covers the sand we washed so clean,
That we put in the aquarium that our class made

These are the fish, their mouths and gills open wide,
Taking in oxygen and giving out carbon dioxide,
For the plants that grow so green,
Giving oxygen to the water, aged for a day,
That covers the sand we washed so clean,
That we put in the aquarium that our class made.

This is the sun so warm and bright,
Bringing the magic of its light
For the gills and mouths open wide,
And the plants that grow so green
Giving oxygen to the water aged for a day
That covers the sand we washed so clean,
That we put in the aquarium that our class made.

Use a unit approach to content fields even when materials are limited. Even in classrooms where the variety of reading materials is limited, it is important to use a unit approach to work in the content fields. Regardless of how much or how little they read, children need to learn to think critically in order to solve problems rather than to accept without question the printed words of their textbooks. They need to turn to arithmetic, language, and spelling textbooks as resource materials to help solve problems just as they

[13] Written by the class of Miss Anna Smethurst, Windsor School, Cincinnati.

do to the reading-matter of social studies, science, and health. The children in the preceding illustrations have been described as working in groups with materials adjusted to their reading levels and interests, but unit activities can also be developed in situations where the class works as a whole.

One fifth grade using a single adopted textbook developed a helpful unit on the Far West. To most of these children, the states to be studied were unfamiliar. Before they began to work they leafed through the entire section in their textbook, commenting on the pictures, contributing other items of information from their own background, and asking questions. Then each child listed the one thing out of all that he had heard and seen that he wanted to know more about. Groups with common interests were formed, and, while all children read selected parts of their text for general background, each group was responsible for a more detailed report on its special topic. Although many of the groups found other sources of information in their classroom encyclopedia and in a few supplementary materials, their major reading experience came from the adopted text.

A single health textbook provided the material for a unit on food. After the children read about balanced meals and had an opportunity to discuss what they had found out, they used pictures cut from magazines and pasted on colored paper to prepare charts of basic food groups and to illustrate typical meals. Discussion next turned to how to set a table properly and how to plan for pleasant meals. Some of this information came from the health text, and some from the teacher. As a culmination of the unit, the children set a special table in the school lunchroom and invited some of the city supervisors and the principal to eat lunch with them.

The children in one class received some useful reference experience with a language textbook when they looked up how to write a business letter in order to send for some special materials. Another group became particularly interested in checking on the correctness of each other's English usage, and found how to use their language textbooks as a help in settling arguments. In another group, a series of arithmetic experiences grew out of a unit during which the children sold seeds to other classes. Here arithmetic textbooks were turned to for extra practice in adding accurately and for help in calculating fractions and percentages. At the beginning of the year one class discussed the purpose of the practice activities in spelling

books and, with the teacher's help, decided that these exercises would be most useful to them if the ones that stressed unfamiliar elements in new words were done with particular care. From this time on, special attention was paid to deciding what each exercise was trying to teach. In another class, a speller was not used consistently as a source of spelling words, but the children helped to suggest the words they thought should be part of their spelling activities. Dictionaries were used extensively by this class for help in pronunciation, meanings, and syllabication. Textbooks are sources of practice activities for groups such as these, but they also serve as reference materials to help in the solution of day-by-day problems.

Draw on resources other than books. A perennial problem in the intermediate grades is that of finding enough material to answer the questions that children pose in developing a unit in a content field. Extensive information may be made available, even if the reading matter is limited in scope or too difficult for a group, if the full resources of school and community are tapped. Furthermore, older children need to learn to use the natural and human resources in the world around them as an aid in solving their problems. They are capable of much wider use of such resources than are children in the primary grades.

Much can be learned about the modern world by going to see for oneself. One class developed a unit around problems of how the community was fed by visiting the local bakery, market, and dairy. In this unit the class as a whole raised the questions that needed to be answered and then the children went visiting in small groups, each accompanied by two or three parents. This plan enabled the teacher to stay at school with the remainder of the class and gave those who did the visiting a reason for reporting carefully and for preparing written records of their trip. Children in one sixth grade learned most of their information about how newspapers are published through a trip to the local newspaper. This was followed by a study of the papers the children brought to school. In time, the reading-matter was expanded by writing to other cities for editions of the daily papers. The city council at work, the town water works, the special industries of a community, or the experimental farm offer other types of firsthand experience.

Community members are usually willing to come to school to talk to the children. Information about industries, professions, and civil services can be obtained in this way. Often, too, people with hobbies

can be of help—the man whose hobby is wildlife, the amateur radio operator, the woman who weaves. One fifth grade developed a safety unit by studying traffic conditions around the school and then enlisting the help of the police traffic department. When their questions had all been answered, these children set about passing on their information by developing a program for the rest of the school.

There are also possibilities of using picture displays, exhibits, slides, models, motion pictures, science experiments, and concrete arithmetic materials. The children in one class developed understanding of the general nature of a Southern plantation by constructing a model of their own. While they read for background, they also paid careful attention to the details in all the pictures they could find. Another group developed a unit on air transportation by building a model airport after the children had taken a trip to a real one. Much of the technical information was supplied by their teacher and by one of the fathers, both of whom had been Air Force pilots. In one fourth grade a Mexican exhibit was collected from children's homes. In a fifth grade, the children gained a good picture of some of the furnishings of pioneer homes through articles that had been stored in attics. Even when books are plentiful, such concrete materials lend reality to studies that are moving progressively away from the here and now, both in time and in space. Reading material is better understood and reading skills are more purposefully used when the classroom provides other ways to learn in addition to reading.

Help children become aware of reading skills. With units in the content fields, as with reading units, children should be helped to become aware of the reading skills they need. The teaching procedures that achieve this are essentially the same as those used when a unit develops around stories in a basal reader or around recreational reading. In the classrooms just described, teachers gave help at several points. Preliminary plans include discussion of how to read. Reading problems are discussed, along with other types of problems, in evaluation and in planning periods as the unit develops. Problems of concern to the entire group are given attention during special periods set aside for that purpose. Help is also given to individuals and to small groups as the unit progresses.

The more clearly the teacher can identify the points at which various types of skills will be needed, the more effective she is likely to be in giving help. The following analysis suggests activities in

which specific types of reading skills may be important. The classification is the same as that used on pages 360 and 361 of this chapter to help identify the types of skills that are called into use by reading units. Comparison of these two analyses may suggest ways in which children's total reading experiences can be planned to supplement each other so that the result is a well-rounded series of activities, calling for many types of reading skills.

Critical evaluation is called for in: Discussing the problems that the group is trying to solve; helping prepare a bibliography of appropriate material; discussing the appropriateness of group notes; telling the class which resource book was the most helpful; finding when it is important to use current materials and when older books are just as effective; deciding which of two conflicting statements is correct; deciding whether a fictional story has any factual basis; deciding whether material read really answers the questions raised; comparing the points of view of two articles on the same topic.

Reading for the general gist of the story is called for in: Skimming a chapter to locate a specific piece of information; looking over several books in order to decide which one is the most likely to be useful for a given problem; reading several chapters for the general setting of a particular problem, reading a description of an arithmetic process, a science experiment, a rule of correct English usage in order to get the sense of the total process before checking on details; writing summary statements in note taking.

Reading with careful attention to details is needed for: Reading group plans and following them out; checking details on such items as clothing or housing for a report, a picture, a frieze, a dramatization; following directions in a science text in order to perform an experiment; reading arithmetic problems; looking up the way to punctuate a quotation; following class plans in a science experiment involving such things as taking temperature, watering plants, recording growth; following class directions for constructing a graph on spelling or reading progress, reporting accurately on daily news items on the bulletin board; keeping a bibliography according to an agreed-upon form, following directions for a game, a recipe.

Adjustments of reading speed are needed in: Skimming several books quickly to evaluate their potential contribution to the group; locating and reading carefully the special details that are needed for one's particular problem, reading such specific materials as an arithmetic problem first for the general gist of the problem and then for details; changing from the closely-packed style of an informational article to a fictional account in social studies in order to get details of customs or ways of earning a living.

Oral-reading experiences are afforded through: Sharing new information with others in one's interest group; reading group or individual re-

ports to the rest of the class; reading to the class stories or other types of creative expression arising out of unit activities; presenting the culmination of a unit to other classes through reports, dramatizations, choral-speaking presentations; reading the minutes of a meeting.

New vocabulary is developed through: Learning new place names; learning the names of famous people; becoming acquainted with the correct names for various types of science equipment; acquiring a minimum technical vocabulary in order to read textbooks in various content fields, sharpening concepts of time and space; seeing pictures which widen understanding of natural phenomena, of people in other lands, of customs.

Reference techniques are needed for: Using indexes, tables of contents, and library card files to locate needed information in a single text or a group of texts, finding appropriate articles in standard reference books such as encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs; interpreting maps, graphs, charts, pictures, and other visual aids, checking a class bibliography to locate specific references, looking up information in a magazine or newspaper, using a dictionary.

Broad interests in reading are developed through: Becoming acquainted with new and interesting informational materials, reading authentic historical materials in fiction form, exploring biographical materials, discovering science magazines, nature magazines, other special periodicals that bear on areas of interest; expanding knowledge of the potential contributions of daily papers.

Giving Help with the Special Reading Problems of the Content Fields

Provide for difficulties with new terms and concepts. Certain types of reading problems specific to the content fields, occur during the activities of almost every unit. One of these results from the new vocabulary with which children must deal. Even when materials in the content fields are chosen with the greatest of care, new terminology and new concepts are likely to cause trouble.

Each content field has its technical vocabulary—*multiply, fraction, kayak, adobe, oasis, equator, hemisphere; feudal, pilgrim, hieroglyphic; digestion, vitamin; planet, magnetism, fossil.* There will also be new technical meanings for familiar terms —a *mixed* number, a *foot* long; the *mouth* of a river, the *foothills* of the mountains, *enamel* on a tooth; weather ten degrees below *zero*; the *South*, *spring* wheat, *claims* to a new land, the *New World.* New place names and personal names will appear—*Northwest Territory, Amazon, Australia, Mediterranean, Socrates, Joan of Arc, Cortez, Thomas Jefferson, Eli Whitney.* In textbooks in fields such as science and arithmetic there will also be unfamiliar symbols and abbreviations. To

all these special problems will be added those occasioned by the general increase in the vocabulary load of intermediate-grade materials, as described in the section on word study in Chapter XII.

The reading problem posed by the vocabulary of the content fields is frequently a joint one of learning new meanings and becoming able to recognize the words in print. Often, reading difficulties in unit activities in the content fields will be reduced considerably if special help is given with new terms. Detailed suggestions for doing this are included in the discussion of word-study problems in Chapter XII. One general technique that is often useful in facilitating the first reading of informational materials is to introduce special terms ahead of time, in a manner similar to the word recognition techniques used by primary teachers. Words may be listed on the chalk board and discussed before the children begin to read. Sometimes a map, a motion picture, or some other visual aid may be used to develop the experience background needed to make the meaning of the new term clear. A bulletin board with well-captioned pictures, or an exhibit in which unfamiliar objects are clearly labelled can help. "We could tell how big a St. Bernard dog is," reported one group, "because we looked at a picture where one was standing beside a man." Children can be helped to become active in expanding their own vocabularies. They can be encouraged to check new terms in the dictionary, to develop their own lists of new words, to cooperate in preparing a class vocabulary list, or to help decide which words are important to add to a spelling list.

It is particularly important for the teacher to realize that concepts may not be clear, even though the vocabulary in which they are phrased is not difficult. Even when illustrations are given, meanings can be clouded. A group of Midwestern children were dubious about the sea-going qualities of a ship described as "about as large as a typical fishing boat." Another group, who had never seen valleys other than the sharp little gully in a nearby park, could not understand how there would be space for covered wagons to go through mountains on such narrow trails. Typical intermediate-grade children are likely to have limited time and space concepts. One fourth grader was astounded to find that Stalin had been living at the time when she was born. For the child who has never travelled, five hundred miles may seem to be a long way, while for the youngster who has motored across the continent it may be considered one day's trip, and for the child who has flown it is a very short distance. Even adults

find it difficult to adjust to the fact that peoples once far distant are now only a few hours away by air. Suggestions for building a classroom environment to aid in concept formation are given in more detail in the word-study section of Chapter XII Visual aids, excursions, and reports of firsthand experiences may all be helpful in providing the meaningful background needed for successful reading

Look for special problems with format and illustrative aids. The particular materials being used in a unit need to be examined for special problems occasioned by their general format and by the ways in which maps, graphs, tables, pictures, and other illustrative aids are used. Typically, texts assume that a child will interrupt his reading to examine them Children may need to be reminded to study a picture in order to clarify a description of a manner of dress or a type of dwelling, to refer to a map in order to understand a discussion of climates, trade routes, or harbors, or to use section or paragraph headings to help locate information In an arithmetic text it may be important to point out where an example has been included, and to take children through it step by step to help them see how to use it for themselves

If a new book is being used for the first time, or a different type of reading problem is being undertaken, it may be helpful to take a period to work out effective reading techniques as a group Special uses of graphs, maps, charts, or pictures may be noted Time may be taken to work through a sample reading problem together—discussing how to handle the format of the book to advantage, how to use the maps, graphs, or pictures to help supply information, and what adjustments to make for general writing style

Special help for individuals and small groups is usually most easily provided as the reading proceeds Difficulties with format or illustrative materials can often be caught by watching for evidence of misinformation occasioned by not reading a map or graph correctly, by looking into the technique being used by a child who says that he can't find any information, by asking children directly if they made use of a picture or some other illustrative aid, or by being alert to partial answers that could have been better rounded out by effective use of illustrative material.

It is important not to assume that children will always have the techniques needed to handle illustrative materials efficiently once their value has been pointed out Children may not be accustomed

to locating detailed information in a picture, or to giving attention to the minute details of an example in an arithmetic text or in a science experiment. Maps, graphs, diagrams, and tables are developed in many different styles. Such skills as reading legends, knowing how to compare relative sizes, responding accurately to number concepts such as fractions or percentages, are not learned quickly and are not always readily readjusted when a visual aid is constructed in a slightly different form. Each new type of illustrative material may require special attention. Teaching procedures will have to be planned in terms of the new problem as it arises.

There will be occasions during the development of a unit when one or more periods will need to be devoted specifically to the problem of learning to handle a new visual aid. There will also be times when a series of specially planned work-type activities will seem desirable. These are included in the section on providing for efficient reference techniques in Chapter XII.

Give help in adjusting reading techniques to varied purposes. In some units requiring extensive reading, skills that were quite effective for story type materials may prove inadequate. Different kinds of textbooks will make different demands. Ability to read for details, for example, may have to be readjusted before a child will get all that he needs out of a closely-packed science text or an arithmetic problem where every word makes a difference. Techniques of skimming may have to be modified in order to make the best possible use of paragraph headings and topic sentences. In reading fictional material for its factual setting, the child may have to make fine distinctions between usable information and the imaginative plot of the story.

Change of pace, which was indicated in Chapter X as one of the most important reading techniques in the intermediate grades, has particular value in situations where a child is reading for information. The most skillful reader typically skims until he locates the material bearing on his specific problem, then reads carefully to get the details he needs. Even in handling such detailed material as an arithmetic problem, it is often helpful to skim for the general gist of the problem and then to go back to fill in needed information. Neither the child who has been accustomed mainly to reading story materials rapidly for the gist of the plot nor the one who customarily reads everything slowly and carefully for details is well equipped

for the more complicated job of securing needed information from a number of sources.

Some help in adjusting reading techniques to new types of materials and new purposes can be given by discussing how to read before a unit begins. If the children's first task is to skim in order to see what information is available, they may talk about how to do this most effectively. Less skilled groups may even work together on this problem for a while. When the children come to the point where they need to read carefully for specific information, discussion and demonstration may again be helpful. The most pointed guidance is often given while individuals and small groups are at work. Cues as to difficulties may be secured by watching for children who appear merely to be leafing through materials, for those who claim that they have been reading but couldn't find anything, for those whose notes seem inadequate, or for those who have encyclopedic notes that are not to the point. Often it is helpful to sit with a child or a small group who are having trouble and to guide their reading for a page or two, asking them how they might have been able to read more effectively and how they think they happened to miss the desired information when they worked by themselves. Class sessions in which children who worked out successful ways of finding information tell how they went about the job can sometimes be helpful. Sometimes problems of ineffective skimming or careless reading of details will call for special practice activities as well as day-by-day help as reading proceeds. Suggestions for planning these work type experiences are included in Chapter XII.

Develop increased skill in critical evaluation. Parallel with other problems in learning to read for information, children have to become increasingly skillful in evaluating what they have read. In part, this is a matter of selecting appropriate information and deciding when sufficient information has been located to solve a problem or to answer a particular set of questions. Guidance as children raise preliminary questions, take notes, and plan how to report on their information will help to develop this skill.

Some of the help in making critical evaluations is given to a group, or to the class as a whole, as a unit begins. This is the time to sharpen questions, to help children raise appropriate sub-questions, and perhaps even to read a few pages together and come to some conclusions as to how to decide what is important. Typically, as a unit develops,

there are evaluation periods when groups report on progress and difficulties. Although it is usually unwise to plan these periods so that children detract from the interest of whatever they are developing as a final report by telling all the information they have located, such evaluation sessions are a help in getting a quick survey of group problems. "Does your group have all the material it needs?" "Are there any topics about which you have found little information?" "Is there any help you need from other groups?" Help in deciding on the adequacy and appropriateness of what has been read is also an integral part of the assistance given as the teacher works with individuals and groups as the reading activities of a unit proceed. In the area of critical evaluation, too, work-type experiences can occasionally be used to help children focus on specific aspects of the problem, although this is perhaps one of the most difficult skills to divorce from on-going classroom activities. Suggestions for such practice exercises have been included in Chapter XII.

As a child reads widely he will discover that textbooks sometimes conflict. Even recommended methods of punctuating a sentence or of addressing a letter may not agree completely. Fictional materials may contain historical inaccuracies or scientific misstatements. If the child is reading more than one daily paper he may find that news is not reported in the same way or that commentators disagree. Unless a class is working entirely from a single textbook, such conflicts are inevitable. Furthermore, they are invaluable in helping to develop critical readers. Learning how to appraise the accuracy of a resource is a second aspect of critical evaluation.

Intermediate grade children can be helped to build standards for evaluating the accuracy of what they read by discussion of conflicts when they are discovered. It may help to learn to look at the date of publication, to talk about the qualifications of authors, and perhaps to do some exploring of how historical information is obtained and of how records are kept. "Our book was published in 1945 and the Almanac in 1955. Would that account for differences in population figures?" "Could you tell whether the writer of the article has ever really travelled in Europe?" "How do you think they knew that date? Why might they not have had adequate records in those days?" "Read it again. Does it really say he did that, or does it say people thought he might have done it?" Current materials from newspapers and magazines need to be scrutinized in a similar fashion. These discussions can take place at any point where they seem appropriate

in the reading activities of the unit. Sometimes the children involved will be those in the particular group where the problem arose. Sometimes the problem may be important enough to raise for consideration by the class as a whole. Of all the contributions to increased reading skill that can be made through unit activities in the content fields, one of the most important is the development of the ability to read widely in a thoughtful and critical manner, rather than to accept without question the statements in a single text.

Critical evaluation has a third aspect. The school is failing to make its full contribution if questions that help children think about democratic values are never raised. Does this action respect the rights of individuals? Is it honest? Is it fair? What are our obligations as citizens of the class, of the community, of the country? Intermediate graders face such issues in their daily lives as they say goodby to brothers entering the armed services, examine the wanton breakage of their classroom windows that has taken place over the week end, or read lurid comic books. Democratic values can come under consideration also as children read about the history of their country, follow the lives of its leaders in biographies, discuss newspaper clippings they have brought for the bulletin board. The entire elementary school program is dedicated to helping children develop the values and attitudes essential to the perpetuating of our democratic society. Children's reading activities have a special contribution to make.

Provide help in locating information. Depending on the type of problem, the task of locating the right materials may be a difficult one. Although they have typically had some experience with tables of contents, chapter titles, and indexes in the primary grades, immature readers in the intermediate grades may not be very skilled in using these reference aids, nor may they have had many contacts with standard reference books. They may also have limited ability in identifying the exact information they need even when they have found a discussion that bears on their general problem. More mature readers may have trouble using sub-topics and cross references, determining the related topics that might bear upon their problem, or deciding which key words to use in trying to locate the information they need. In one group, for example, the children looking for a list of British colonies, started their hunt under the word *colony*. Another group, less mature, had trouble finding information about Paul Revere because they looked up the name *Paul*. Depend-

ing on the organization of the school library, children may also face problems of applying general reference techniques to the library card file. In addition, the children in a particular class are going to need to become acquainted with the specific types of help available in the reference materials in their room.

Teachers have developed a variety of ways of giving help in locating information. With immature groups, it is often useful to shortcut the process by putting markers in the appropriate pages or by listing them in a bibliography on the chalkboard. More mature readers may be given valuable experience if they are encouraged to take time at the beginning of a unit to skim available material and prepare their own bibliographies. These can be checked against the teacher's list and posted for easy reference.

Listing pages may not be of sufficient help, particularly for immature readers, if the children are looking for the answer to a specific question in a book which has a general discussion of a total area. This is another time when it is often important to work directly with a group. The first time an encyclopedia, an almanac, an atlas, or another reference aid is used, it may be advisable to plan a special lesson on how to use it. A new task calling for wide reading in several types of books may be begun by examining the books and talking about how to skim them quickly to appraise their contents and how to locate specific items of information without reading the entire book or article. Often the librarian is able to give special help with library techniques.

Although some of the most effective assistance in learning to locate information is given in the course of helping the children solve the problems they actually face as a unit proceeds, specific practice to polish such techniques as using alphabetical order or choosing appropriate key words may be of value. Suggestions for these activities can be found in the section on developing effective reference techniques in Chapter XII.

Plan to give help with note-taking and reporting. Unit activities in the content fields frequently call for skill in collecting information and reporting it to classmates, a task which may be either fairly simple or difficult and complex. A series of separate questions, each with a definite answer, poses a relatively easy problem of reading accurately to locate details, whereas a comprehensive report may require note-taking from several sources and a skillful summary. Outlines may be needed either to record the information being read,

or to serve as a basis for a group report. If several books are being used, simple bibliographies may be required.

One of the most important contributions to skill in good reporting is the statement of a clear problem. Children who are reading vaguely within a general area are not so likely to make critical evaluations of what is read, or to be so selective in their note-taking, as those who know exactly what they are looking for. Questions or problems need to be clarified before reading begins. As groups begin work, it is helpful to check on the adequacy of the notes before the reading has progressed very far. Until they have become skilled in note-taking, most children will also benefit from individual help as they work. Special reading problems that are hindering the note-taking process can often be caught in this way.

Questions to be answered can be kept before the group by a variety of recording devices. Some of these were indicated earlier as units in the content fields were described. Lists of questions can be posted on the bulletin board, or left in a corner of the chalkboard. Each child may copy the list for his own notebook, or a secretary may keep the list for the group. Periodic progress reports during which the original lists are checked also help groups to see what has been accomplished and to rethink purposes and identify what remains to be done.

Many teachers report that a major problem in note-taking is that of copying material word by word from the reference text. Often the cause lies either in the difficulty of the material, which may be so far beyond the child's level of comprehension that he is unable to state in his own words what he has read, or in limited ability in self-expression which makes it difficult for the child to rephrase the material, even though it has been understood. Too-general assignments may also lead to copying, especially if the information related to the area on which the child is to report clearly meets his needs without any changes.

Copying can be discouraged by specific questions, phrased in the child's words. For example, one fourth grade studying Switzerland asked, among other things: "Why do the people do wood carving?" "What is Switzerland well known for?" "Why do we connect the Red Cross with Switzerland?" It often helps, also, to say, "Write down your ideas with your books closed." When facility with written language is particularly limited, it may be important to place less emphasis on written summaries, and to plan for reports that make use

of oral statements, panels, discussions, dramatizations, pictures, models, or some other means of sharing information that does not require skill in written expression. It is also helpful to raise questions about reports that seem to be copied—asking a child to tell what he found in his own words, asking for the meaning of an unfamiliar word over which he stumbles in his notes, encouraging him to look up hard words in the dictionary, praising him when he chooses an expression that is meaningful to the group. Children who become conscious of the desirability of saying things their own way often challenge each other. "You couldn't pronounce that word—you just copied it from the book." "Did you really write that?" "Where did he get that? I couldn't understand it." "I liked Joan's report because she used her own words."

ENCOURAGING RECREATIONAL READING

Even with the varied experiences with different types of reading materials provided through the group activities in reading that have just been discussed, special plans need to be made to ensure that children are growing in their enjoyment of independent reading, widening their reading interests and refining their reading tastes. Encouraging recreational reading is an important aspect of the total intermediate reading program, just as it is in the primary grades.

Provide a classroom atmosphere that encourages independent reading. In the classrooms that have been described it is difficult to make a clear distinction between recreational reading and the reading that goes on as part of other classroom activities. The entire atmosphere in these situations is conducive to independent reading. Children start with a single story they enjoyed and go on to locate others on the same topic. They read a group of stories in a basal reader and are given opportunities to discuss the ones they like best and to share them with other groups. Reading units are sometimes developed around recreational reading activities. In a unit in the field of social studies, the children read not only basal reference texts but also historical novels and biography. On classroom bulletin boards are special articles of interest. Children are encouraged to explore daily papers, to read family magazines, and to enjoy children's newspapers and magazines. Time is provided for individual hobbies and encouragement given to read about them. Materials are selected so that the retarded reader can find some he can enjoy

This is the type of classroom atmosphere that encourages a child to read.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the classroom environments that have been described is the emphasis on letting children share in planning the purposes for their reading. They are not confined to assignments set up by the teacher. They are in part responsible for identifying stories they like and for proposing the ones that are interesting enough to share with other groups. They are permitted to suggest that they would like to do some more reading on a given topic. They are encouraged to read widely for information, making somewhat independent choices of the books that seem most helpful. It is possible for them to suggest how a group of stories may be handled, to propose the next topic for group activity, or to bring to the class a specially liked library book. In such settings, children develop the attitude of taking responsibility for seeking satisfying reading experiences. They also come to think of reading as fun, and of reading activities as offering many different kinds of stimulating experiences—chances to read silently, good stories to laugh about, fun in sharing a play or group of poems with other groups, fiction that makes history live, and science facts that are as exciting as fiction.

Even with an atmosphere designed to encourage wide reading, it is important, as was suggested in Chapter X, to plan definite time for recreational reading in the weekly schedule. If it is thought of as a chance addition to the week's experiences, to be engaged in when everything else is finished, the children who are likely to have the greatest number of recreational-reading experiences are those who already read rapidly and efficiently. Those who plod slowly through the week's activities are equally in need of this type of reading experience. Indeed, their need may be even greater because in these activities they can have the fun of reading very easy, interesting stories. Often, even with the greatest care in selection, it is difficult to find informational materials that offer poor readers this same encouragement to read.

Suggestions for scheduling reading activities were included in Chapter X. Book clubs, sharing periods, poetry hours, and other types of group activities were proposed as well as time for independent reading. It was also proposed that the activities of a reading group could, from time to time, focus on a unit developed around recrea-

tional reading. In this way, even the child who is reluctant to do much independent reading is drawn into a certain number of recrea tional-reading activities. It does not matter whether a period in the weekly schedule is labelled "Free Reading," "Reading Groups," or "Social Studies," so long as the activity helps to provide for recreational-reading needs.

Make special efforts to acquaint children with books. Reading is infectious. When everyone is doing it and everyone is talking about what he likes, the child who has not had any particular interest in wide reading is more likely to start to read. It is helpful to use as many ways as possible of acquainting children with recreational-reading possibilities. The examples of ways of sharing reading experiences given in the preceding section ranged from reading a story aloud to another group or putting up a simple bulletin-board display to book fairs and elaborate programs for parents or other classes.

Sharing the results of unit activities is not the only way of acquainting children with interesting books. Book jackets can be placed on classroom bulletin boards. Librarians can often find time to tell about new books of particular interest. If there are classroom funds available for purchasing books, children can share in selecting them. The books on the library table can be changed from time to time so that new stories are available. Library reading periods can be used to let a child with an interesting book read it to a small group of friends. Time just before children return books to the school or community library is often well spent asking children what they have enjoyed about their reading and having them suggest others in the class to whom they think the book would be interesting. One teacher engaged children in informal discussions about what they were reading as they arrived in the morning. Often she could be found surrounded by a knot of early-comers, each anxious to tell about his book. When a new unit in a content field is begun, many teachers make a practice of borrowing related recreational books from the school library and devoting a period to telling children about them. Then, movies, radio, and television programs may center around outstanding fiction and provide opportunities to talk about the books. Genuine interest in what children are reading and enthusiasm for their books lead to many incidental opportunities to give encouragement for wide reading.

One of the problems faced by a busy teacher is knowing exactly what children have been reading so that it is possible to comment intelligently on their interests. There are many kinds of classroom

and individual charts that serve to show at a glance how the reading is progressing. One group kept reading lists in correct bibliographical form in individual library notebooks. Other children set up a target and wrote their names around the outer circle. As each new book was read, the child wrote its title on a small arrow and pasted it on his line leading to the bull's-eye. The children in one fifth grade did illustrated book reviews, bound them in wallpaper, and tucked each new one into pockets bearing their initials on a wall chart. Children in another group wrote book reviews on small cards and attached these, one after the other, behind their names on a special chart. The result was a simple bar graph. At stated intervals, the chart was cleared and the reviews were transferred to a card file and placed after the child's name. A sixth grade used a map of the world and pinned the title of the book and the child's name on the correct site. In addition to providing a record of the reading done, these extrinsic devices sometimes prove the starting point for a child when other means of encouraging him to read have had little effect.

Expand intermediate-graders' acquaintance with their heritage of prose and verse. Many children take their first steps toward becoming acquainted with the world of literature long before they come to school. From kindergarten on, their teachers help them to expand their knowledge of their heritage of prose and verse. Intermediate graders, with their ability to read widely and independently, need to be encouraged to explore the classics of children's literature. Their teachers have a special privilege and responsibility to make sure that they have come to know, as familiar friends, such characters as Alice, Mowgli, the March family, Paul Bunyan, Tom Sawyer, Robinson Crusoe, and Long John Silver. Nine-to twelve-year-olds may also delve with enthusiasm into folk and fairy tales from many lands, and into books of myths and legends. In addition, they need to become acquainted with modern writers--Carol Ryrie Brink, Hugh Lofting, Elizabeth Coatsworth, Robert Lawson, Pamela Travers, Eleanor Estes, Robert McCloskey. A well-balanced classroom library will make provision for contacts with distinguished authors, past and present.

The policy of reading to children should not be abandoned merely because they can explore for themselves. Books like *The Wind in the Willows*[14] have a special appeal when they are read aloud. Reading aloud to children often can be a way of introducing them to books

[14] Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933.

that are slightly beyond their reading level. The children in one sixth grade became acquainted with Mark Twain and with O. Henry as their teacher read to them "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," and "The Ransom of Red Chief." This teacher and his group also enjoyed reading aloud the nonsense of Edward Lear and of Ogden Nash. In addition, teachers who love poetry will find time to help their children come to know outstanding poets—Walter De La Mare, Rachel Field, Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay. Then there are becoming available an increasing number of recordings which can be used to extend children's experiences in listening to poetry, to choral speech, and to drama. Both reading and listening are avenues through which intermediate-graders should be helped to explore broadly the world of books.

Provide opportunities for reading that may lead to enriched personal living. Children may be helped to become acquainted with many story-book characters whose problems, values, and ways of thinking throw light on their own. While there is no clear evidence that a child's reaction to the life of someone about whom he reads will necessarily carry over into his own personal life, it is possible that intermediate-grade children may be helped to absorb some of the values of their culture and to understand themselves better if they read under the guidance of a sympathetic teacher. *Blue Willow* [15] and *Strawberry Girl* [16] may help to develop insights into other parts of the country and into other ways of living. *Johnny Tremain* [17] may interpret some of the spirit of revolutionary days to skilled readers. *The Hundred Dresses* [18] may help some child better to understand the importance of group living; and in *Call It Courage* [19] another may find a parallel to his own feelings in a situation he fears. Books do not have to be moralized upon in order to give children the opportunity to identify with their heroes and heroines, and perhaps to face some of their own problems, and to examine some of their own attitudes.

Plan activities so as to develop reading tastes. Children need to become more discriminating in their choice of books. They need to begin to sense the variety of materials available, to explore new areas,

[15] Doris Gates, *Blue Willow*. New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1940.

[16] Lois Lenski, *Strawberry Girl*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1945.

[17] Esther Forbes, *Johnny Tremain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943.

[18] Eleanor Estes, *The Hundred Dresses*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944.

[19] Armstrong Perry, *Call It Courage*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940.

and to develop standards for judging good writing. This does not mean that they should necessarily be encouraged to read longer and harder books. Recreational-reading time is not the time to try to bring a child's reading "up to grade" or to belittle his choice of books because he prefers primary materials. "We didn't think reading was much fun," the children in one fifth grade reported to their mothers, "until the librarian helped us find easy books." For this group of average ability, that discovery about how to choose books was the most important outcome of a recreational-reading project. Slow readers, and retarded readers especially, need easy books and short books so that it does not take forever to finish a story.

Many of the techniques used by primary teachers to help to develop reading tastes are also appropriate for the intermediate grades. Tastes and standards are built through the informal discussions that have been described. The librarian may recommend a new book or report that others by a favorite author are now available. As children talk about their books they may tell what points they liked and why. The teacher can help to locate other books that meet the same criteria. Sometimes it is the teacher who proposes a new area for exploration and brings in biographies, historical fiction, or a new type of adventure story. Reading favorite books to children as a regular part of the class program can be helpful. It does not necessarily take much expenditure of time at any one point to build reading tastes.

Book reviews can be useful as ways of developing reading tastes, if they are not routine assignments. Children can review books orally as part of a book club meeting. They can tell briefly about their books before they return them to the library. The children in one class decided to try to "sell" others on new books by seeing how good an advertisement for the book they could give in their reviews. Another group kept a class notebook. As each new child read the book he added his comments. In a sixth grade this procedure was modified by placing each new set of comments in an envelope in the back of the book. Activities such as these serve the purpose of book reviews without causing the activity to become routine.

Many types of unit activities were also mentioned in Chapter X as ways of improving reading tastes—a book fair to acquaint other children with good reading; a study of comic books, why they are popular, and what library books best meet the same needs; special reading of biographies; choral-speaking activities; units in which

CHAPTER XII

DEVELOPING READING SKILLS THROUGH SPECIAL PRACTICE ACTIVITIES IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

IN THE total reading experiences proposed for the intermediate grades in Chapter X, provision is made for special practice activities for individuals and for groups. These activities are not suggested as a routine part of the reading program, but as a means of individualizing instruction and focussing it at points where new needs develop or weaknesses become apparent. They are seen as a way of supplementing the help given as the reading units described in the preceding chapter progress. The quantity of such activities and the amount of time given to them, as well as their focus, are determined partly by the nature of the on going classroom activities and partly by the capabilities of the particular group. The reading units and the other functional classroom activities that have just been discussed will provide, for some children, a large share of the practice needed for the development of efficient reading techniques. Others will require much supplementary help. Every child is likely to reach one or more points in his progress in learning to read when he will benefit from a series of experiences of a work type nature.

Suggestions for scheduling practice activities and for establishing needed groups were made in Chapter X. For some immature children, procedures similar to those suggested for the primary grades in Chapters VI and VII may be more appropriate. As indicated in these earlier chapters, special practice sessions will be most effective when they, too, are developed cooperatively, with many of the same elements of planning and evaluation that characterize the development of a unit of work. Children can be more intelligent and self-directing about their work if they understand what purposes it is

to serve and why it is needed. This understanding is important whether the situation involves a single child engaged in a series of work-type exercises, an entire class practicing to establish a new skill, or a group at work on the activities of a unit in a content field.

A first step in developing a practice activity cooperatively with children is to help them see the value of the additional practice. Identification of special reading needs can come in many ways. Children themselves may report a problem. "Our group couldn't find any material we needed." "It takes such a long time to do all that reading." "It's hard to understand him. He reads too fast." Teachers, working with groups or individuals, may identify weaknesses of which children are unaware. "Most of the groups are missing important pieces of information as they read." "As I check your notes, it seems to me that you are copying the whole chapter. I wonder if you could learn how to write down just what you need to answer the questions." "Look at the list of the words we didn't know. They all have three or more syllables. Wouldn't it be a good idea to work on pronouncing longer words?" Sometimes a problem can be foreseen as a new activity is undertaken —the first major project calling for an encyclopedia; the first systematic use of the dictionary; the first extensive experience in choral reading of poetry; or the first time an outline is needed. Short informal tests are a help in identifying difficulties. Standardized tests can be analyzed in order to discover patterns of errors. All such concrete evidences of difficulty can be used to help children see the need for special practice.

Just as children developing a reading unit or a unit in a content field share in planning next steps, so children working with a series of practice exercises should share in planning their activities. It is usually the teacher who suggests the appropriate exercise, but the children need to see why it was suggested and what skills it is likely to serve. "You are the people who read so fast you miss things. Here are some work-sheets that ask you questions you can't answer unless you read carefully." "When you can't break a word into syllables, you often have trouble learning to spell it. Here are some exercises that will help you with syllables." "All of us had trouble yesterday finding the topics we wanted in the encyclopedia because we didn't know what words to look for. Here are some questions to try."

If they are to be self-directing about their activities, children also need to share in setting up the proposed schedule for practice. "We are all going to lose time in our reference reading unless we learn

how to take better notes. Shall we plan to work on that first tomorrow morning?" "Suppose for the next week our practice group meets for ten minutes right after recess." "If I leave the practice exercises out on the table, could you work ahead? Suppose I post a chart, and you can check off each exercise as you finish it." "That would be a good activity for spelling partners. Could you do it then?"

Continuous evaluation is as important in the development of a special skill as it is in any other type of activity. Children need the opportunity to discuss new difficulties, to check the accuracy of the work they have been doing, and to decide on next steps. It is this type of participation that builds a classroom atmosphere in which there is pride in being able to identify one's needs and willingness to accept help without feeling inadequate or defeated by one's lack of skill. Part of this evaluation usually takes place as children meet to check on work type assignments. They discuss right answers, tell how they secured them and why they are right, help the child who was wrong figure out his difficulty, and decide whether progress has been made and how much more practice is likely to be needed.

More elaborate systems of evaluation have sometimes been worked out to guide longer practice units. A group concerned with improving oral reading set up a *Reading Court* and listed all the "traffic violations" that poor oral readers were likely to commit. This check list was mimeographed and, with the help of the group, each child identified his own "reading crimes." At intervals during the week, and often at home with parents as an audience, the children practiced oral reading, each focussing on his special problem. Once a week court was held in the reading group and each child was helped to evaluate his progress. This project lasted for over a month. Another group used a tape recorder at intervals to check on oral-reading progress. One class worked a silent reading test-sheet once a week. Each child then checked on his own chart the type of question he missed. During the week following, he practiced with a number of work-type activities appropriate for his need. A group of children with difficulties in word-analysis skills worked through many of the exercises in a suitable workbook, listing carefully in their own notebooks the words and sounds with which they needed special help. In each of these activities, the special practice ceased and the group disbanded or went on to other types of experiences at the point where the evaluations showed that sufficient command of the new skill had been gained.

At a number of points in the discussion that follows, basal readers are suggested as one source of interesting practice material. These books do not serve their full purpose if they are used only for the unit activities described in Chapter XI. On the other hand, precautions need to be taken to avoid turning almost every basal-reader story into a practice exercise by placing upon the chalkboard a list of questions to which the children routinely write answers, or even by having the children work systematically through the questions which are found at the end of each story in some series, intriguing though these questions may be. The most effective integration of children's total reading experiences will be achieved when their teacher takes the responsibility for appraising their present status and for deciding on their needs. The lists of ways in which the unit activities described in Chapter XI contribute to the development of the same reading skills that are described in this chapter are included as an aid both in studying children's needs and in planning for appropriate balance in their activities and for a maximum of challenging experiences.

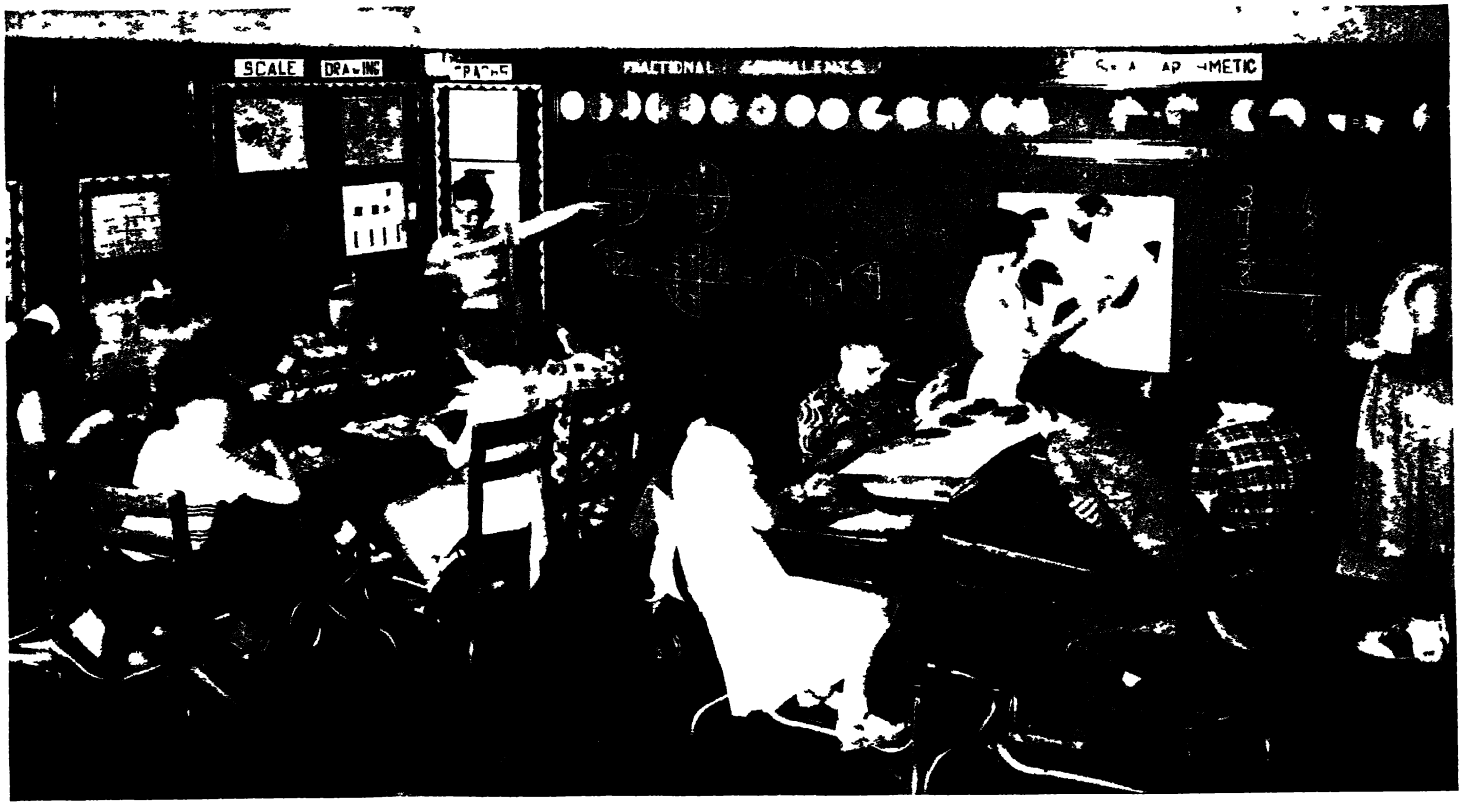
One of the most difficult problems in planning practice activities for older children is to identify correctly where the need lies. Skills such as learning to analyze words, to read accurately, to give the general gist of a story, or to use reference texts efficiently, have many subskills which may demand attention. There are also countless interrelations among skills. Slow reading speed may be the result of poor techniques of word analysis, of inability to use chapter and paragraph headings as a guide for skimming, of lack of clear purpose regarding what is to be located, or of a tendency to vocalize. Inability to read accurately for details could result from too slow or too rapid reading, from not having a clear purpose for which to read, or from inattention to key words. The more effective the practice, the more clearly the exact nature of the problem is seen and the more precisely the activity is designed to meet the child's need.

In the sections that follow, there are, first, an analysis of the nature of the skill under discussion; second, suggestions of possible interrelationships with other skills; and, third, a discussion of typical activities that might be used for special practice. No attempt has been made to designate activities for particular grade levels. Most of those suggested can be adapted to several levels of ability.



D Arthur Brucker

Library corners can be attractive even if furniture is old. Colorful envelopes provide an interesting way of keeping a record of one's reading, and book covers advertise what's new. (Copyright 1954 Board of Education Cincinnati Ohio)



D Arthur Bricker

Arithmetic contributes to reading skill. Graphs and charts are more meaningful when you've worked out the relationships with concrete objects first.

DEVELOPING TECHNIQUES OF EFFECTIVE COMPREHENSION

For the purposes of discussion, the skills involved in effective comprehension have been classified in three groups: Those concerned with making a critical evaluation of what is read; those related to following the general gist of a paragraph in order to summarize it, follow its sequence, or predict an outcome from what has been read; and those centering around reading carefully for details, either in isolation or in the step-by-step process of following directions.

In earlier chapters it has been pointed out that the skillful reader is noted for the versatility of his attack. He varies his techniques with his purpose and with the material he is reading. Starting with a clear purpose he skims, using such aids as section headings, paragraph headings, and topic sentences, until he reaches the part of the material that most clearly bears upon his problem. At this point he may read with careful attention to details. At the same time he may be fitting these details into his understanding of the passage as a whole. At every step he makes critical evaluations in terms of his original purposes—judging when information is relevant, appraising its accuracy, and deciding how it applies and where it can be used. This versatility in approach is almost impossible to teach through a series of special practice exercises. It comes as children read widely for many purposes.

Developing Techniques of Critical Evaluation

Identify the skills involved in making critical evaluations. Because the ability to make critical evaluations in terms of reading purposes is, in a sense, the basis of all intelligent reading, problems in this area were discussed or implied at several points in Chapter XI. As suggested in that chapter, critical evaluation calls, first, for ability to think through a problem so that the reader knows exactly what information he needs. This includes not only being able to make a clear statement of a general problem, but also being able to identify a number of definite sub-problems. "We are studying about how the Indians lived, and here is our list of questions." "These are the things we are going to look for to help plan our mural." "This is what we need to know before we start to build our birdhouses." In the realm of appreciation, the problem may be one of setting up criteria for selecting an appropriate story to dramatize, for choosing

a story to recommend to another group, or for deciding which of several poems to use for choral speaking.

As he begins to read, the child must be able to judge the appropriateness of each piece of information he locates. He must know when he has found the answer to his question and when he has located merely a general statement bearing on the area as a whole. He needs to be able to distinguish a factual statement from fiction or from an opinion. When statements conflict, he must have a means of evaluating his authorities. In choosing a story to dramatize or to recommend for others to read, he must be able to identify in it the elements proposed as appropriate criteria for judging its worth. He must also be able to decide when he has answered his questions and when he needs further information. Essentially, the problem of developing skill in critical evaluation is one of helping the child think as he reads—about the authenticity of his information; about its appropriateness to his problem; and, from the standpoint of appreciation, about the way in which it is written. A beginning may also be made at this level in appraising an author's point of view or special bias.

Make sure the child has the background and the related skills important in making critical evaluations. Many related factors can complicate the problem of making critical evaluations. Experience background may be limited. If a child has never tried to dramatize a story, he is not going to be sensitive to the criteria to use in deciding on the appropriateness of a story for effective dramatization. If he has little experience with farms, he may not know what questions to suggest if his group is embarking on a study of what the farmer contributes to our welfare. Lack of experience also influences a child's sensitivity to the accuracy of what he reads. If he has no experience against which to check his reading, he may not sense inadequacies in descriptions of other countries, people, or ways of living and working. Part of the problem of helping children become able to make critical evaluations is to provide the background that enables them to understand clearly what they read.

Inadequate reading skills also get in the way of critical evaluations. Sometimes a child may lack the reference techniques he needs fully to explore the material available to him. If the material is difficult, either in concepts or in sentence structure, a child may have trouble recognizing the answers to his question. Even when easy material is provided, the youngster who is unskilled in varying his

reading approach may have trouble. If he does not think of the general significance of the paragraph as he goes along, he may miss certain details because he does not see how they fit into the pattern. If he does not read carefully for details, he may miss some of the points he is looking for or he may not catch an inaccurate statement or a misleading implication. Speed of reading may also be involved. The slow, careful reader may not cover enough material to see its full possibilities for his problem, while the child who reads too rapidly may miss the implications of key details. All such potential problem areas need to be studied when a child has difficulty in making critical evaluations of what he reads.

Provide practice that calls for the child to think critically. The type of help provided for children who have trouble making critical evaluations depends upon the skill involved. Should the difficulty lie in a related area such as too rapid reading or inability to read material of a given difficulty level, the help would come either through practice for more appropriate reading speed or through the provision of easier material. Help in establishing clear purposes for reading will tend to be given most effectively through discussion as real problems arise in relation to unit activities. These procedures are described in Chapter XI.

Specific practice in critical evaluation can be given through work-type activities and through group discussions focussed directly on problems of setting standards or of deciding when material is pertinent. Short basal-reader selections are excellent sources of practice, as they provide sufficient interesting material to make a number of types of critical judgments possible. The questions children answer should raise problems similar to those they are meeting in their daily work. Long answers are not always necessary. Children can check statements as *helps, does not help*, or classify them as *factual* or *fictional, proven in the text* or *not proven*. In discussions they can react to the motives of a character or to significant aspects of his behavior where value judgments are involved. The following suggest typical practice activities that may be useful. These can be adapted for use with many different reading materials.

Deciding on the general appropriateness of materials can be practiced through: Skimming a selected group of stories in a basal reader to decide which ones bear on a given problem; sorting a set of newspaper clippings according to their bearing on a series of problems; choosing which of three stories could best be dramatized and telling why; choosing from a

list of chapter titles those most likely to be helpful in a given problem.

Deciding on the appropriateness of specific pieces of information is needed in: Filling in missing points in a partially constructed outline; selecting paragraphs to read aloud to answer specific questions about a basal-reader story; choosing from a group of mimeographed paragraphs the ones which bear on a particular problem; checking a series of statements from a basal reader in terms of such standards as, *helps with my problem, does not help with my problem.*

Telling factual materials from fiction or from opinions is called for in: Reading a semi-fictional story and listing statements which could be true and statements which are probably make-believe; checking a group of statements from a basal reader in terms of such standards as *story proves this true, this might be true but story does not tell, story proves this false;* analyzing newspaper reports for statements of fact and opinion, for the special biases of the writer; analyzing appropriate newspaper advertisements.

Standards of appreciation are called for in: Listing the points to consider in choosing a story to read to another reading group, parents, or younger children; developing bases for deciding which of two stories could best be dramatized; deciding which of a group of basal-reader stories on a similar topic one likes best and why; preparing a special report on one's favorite author for a book club; discussing the mood to be created in developing several choral-speaking presentations.

Helping Children Follow the General Gist of a Passage

Identify the skills involved in following the gist of a passage. Ability to get the general significance of a passage is needed in most wide reading. It is basic to the enjoyment of recreational reading. It is an important aspect of locating information, since it provides the reader with a framework within which to operate. It is the skill needed in identifying cause-and-effect relationships, tracing the sequence of events, or predicting the probable outcome of a series of events. It is used when the reader gives a title for a paragraph or story, decides how a character felt or predicts what he might do next, outlines scenes for dramatization, or gives the plot of a story as a book report.

Knowing the purpose for which one is reading is, again, an important aspect of the problem. The reader also must be able to identify the key points in the passage and often needs to place them in order. As new points are made, he has to see how these fit into the preceding discussion. As illustrations or supporting points are given, he needs to be able to identify these in relation to the general theme of the material. Reading for the general impression of a

passage demands a conscious effort to pull ideas together, to see relationships, and to draw conclusions.

Make sure the child has related skills important in following the gist of a passage. Many of the reading problems that cause difficulty when children make critical evaluations of what they read also get in the way of following the general gist of the passage. All problems of getting meaning from what is read hinge, in part, on the difficulty of the passage, and sensing the general significance of what is read is no exception. If a child has difficulty pronouncing key words, reads very slowly and carefully because he has to stop to make painful analyses of many new words, or is confused by the meanings of the words he reads, his attention is likely to be focussed on these isolated problems and not on the passage as a whole. While the problem of following the general idea of a passage does not typically call for remembering many details, certain skills of careful reading are important. It is often helpful to note words and phrases such as *next, before, the first, the most important.* Details need to be seen, not in isolation, but in relation to the general meaning of what is read. As the amount of material to be covered increases, reference skills, such as using the title of a chapter, the section or paragraph headings, the table of contents, and the summary at the end of the chapter, are important aids in getting the general significance of what is read.

Provide practice that calls for a general impression of a passage. Some of the most valuable practice in following the general gist of a passage comes as a child goes about reading activities such as those described in Chapter XI—skimming to locate needed material, reporting on recreational reading, deciding on the scenes needed to dramatize a story. Special practice activities can be developed around basal-reader stories or around other relatively short passages. It is important that the passages selected be varied in content. A story written for entertainment is in a different style than an informational article, and an article giving directions is likely to be phrased more precisely than one giving general information. Children need to have the experience of reading for the general sense of such varied types of materials. Furthermore, they need to engage in activities that help them learn to adjust their reports in terms of their purposes. The items chosen to summarize the same adventure story are different, depending on whether one is thinking of it as a story to read aloud to others, a book to recommend to a boy who likes ad-

venture stories, or a source of information for children who want to know what animals live in the mountains.

Questions calling for a reaction to the general idea of a passage should require answers that summarize, titles to paragraphs, or statements of main points. Children may write the answer in their own words or check various types of objective-test forms. The following suggest typical practice activities.

Summarizing the general contents of a passage is called for in: Giving titles to a series of mimeographed paragraphs; choosing the correct one of three proposed titles for a paragraph; choosing one of three or four statements answering the question, *What is this paragraph about;* choosing the correct answer to tell how a character in a paragraph felt, acted, looked; choosing which of several questions is answered in a given paragraph; sorting paragraphs clipped from newspapers or mimeographed, according to the topics they cover; writing single paragraphs summarizing a longer passage; classifying paragraphs on a given topic in terms of whether they are factual or fictional, whether they would help to answer a given question or not.

Identifying the sequence of events in a passage is needed for: Making an outline; putting in the missing points in a partially finished outline; listing the steps given in a story to describe the unfolding of a special activity; deciding on the scenes for a play; rearranging a series of statements from a story in the order in which they came, writing a brief book review or telling the class briefly about a favorite book; choosing the correct statement to answer such questions as, *Which came first, What came next.*

Providing Experiences in Reading Carefully for Directions or Details

Identify the skills involved in reading details. Reading for directions or details depends, as do other comprehension techniques, on a clear purpose. It calls for enough exactness to assure the precise noting of a date, an event, or a description. It requires attention to descriptive adjectives; to phrases indicating comparisons, such as *taller than, as large as, heavier than*; and to words giving clues to sequence, such as *first, the next step, before, after.* When directions are involved, it requires the identification of an orderly sequence of steps. Reading to note details or to follow directions frequently calls for willingness to reread in order to check specific points. It is a precise, accurate approach to materials. This is the reading skill that is needed to follow group plans effectively, to collect the detailed information needed for a group report, to perform a science experi-

ment, to read an arithmetic problem, or to report accurately on daily news items on the bulletin board.

Make sure the child has related skills important in noting details. Skillful detailed reading is dependent both upon the techniques of critical evaluation and upon those of following the general gist of a passage. Because the skillful reader of details knows what he is looking for, he uses many of the same techniques he would use to get the general idea of a passage, both in order to locate the details he needs and to understand them in their setting. Change of pace also has been identified as an important aid in activities such as following directions, reading arithmetic problems, or tracing the historical sequence of events, where it is often helpful to skim for general understanding of the passage first. As the job of locating information becomes more complex, the related reference skills of using tables of contents and indexes become important. In addition, the general difficulty level of the material to be read and the learner's experience background influence the effectiveness of detailed reading just as they affect other aspects of comprehension.

Provide practice that calls for precise reading. Practice activities centering on detailed reading ask questions such as *what, when, how, what time, where, in what order, how many, what kind.* These are the types of questions with which the child turns to his social-studies report, his science textbook, or the article he has clipped from the daily paper. Work-type materials can be developed around short mimeographed passages or stories in basal readers, accompanied by a variety of multiple-choice, true-false, or completion questions. Because reading for details is particularly important in informational reading, a number of the practice passages should be factual in nature. The difficulty of the reading problem can be governed somewhat by the question. The answer to a question worded in almost the exact phrasing of the book is easier to locate than one that calls for an inference, or for seeing the relationship between two facts.

Because it is important to teach children to read with clear purposes in mind, the child should know the questions he is to answer before he starts to read. It is sometimes argued that the youngster who knows what he is to look for will merely turn pages until the right answer appears. This is not likely to happen if questions are phrased so that the answer is not immediately apparent and if children have been helped to become truly interested in learning to read well. Furthermore, if this procedure leads to correct answers,

it can be argued that such intelligent skimming is more effective than indiscriminate noting of all the details in the passage, pertinent or otherwise. Except for an occasional demonstration of the importance of reading with care, children should not be given an assignment to read a passage without knowing, at least in general terms, what they are reading for. This applies equally to special practice and to assignments in the content fields. Typical practice activities are suggested in the paragraphs that follow.

Practice in locating separate details can be given by: Answering questions asking *who, what kind, what color, how old, when, where*, answering factual statements about a passage with *yes* or *no, true* or *false;* completing factual statements about a passage, choosing the correct word to complete statements of details from a passage.

Practice in discovering related details can be given by: Listing important details about the characters in a story; matching the names of several characters with appropriate descriptions, classifying facts in two or three columns according to a scheme suggested by the contents of the passage—list the animals that hibernate and those that do not, list the methods used by pioneers and those used today.

Experience in following directions may be given through: Carrying out mimeographed directions for construction, cooking, making charts, making classroom decorations, or some other appropriate activity, putting in order a set of statements indicating a sequence of events; listing, step by step, a process described in an informational story in a basal reader, answering *true* or *false*, or completing key statements about a set of directions from a workbook, an arithmetic problem, or a description of a science activity.

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE READING RATE

Identify the techniques needed for effective reading rate. Consolidation of the skills that make for effective reading rate comes largely at the intermediate-grade level after primary techniques of comprehension, and particularly those of word analysis, have been well established. Popular magazine articles often imply that the most rapid reader is the most effective reader. Actually, as indicated in the objectives of the intermediate-grade reading program in Chapter X, the most efficient reader is the one who can vary his speed appropriately in terms of the reading task he is undertaking. Rapid reading is effective for locating needed material, for certain types of recreational reading, for skimming to appraise the potential value of material, for rechecking familiar material for needed information, and for getting the general idea of a passage. The reader must go

more slowly if he is paying attention to details, looking for a specific piece of information, trying to follow a set of directions, or working out an arithmetic problem. Slower rate is also needed for recreational reading when the enjoyment of the passage depends on being aware of its descriptive qualities or its cadence.

The effective reader varies his rate not only from one type of material to another, but within a single reading task. He skims to locate needed information, slows down to read carefully when he has found it, rereads rapidly to be sure he has understood it correctly, and takes notes on one point at a time. It is this flexibility in approach that is the ultimate objective in helping children develop effective reading rate.

Because rate of reading is dependent upon the purposes for which the child is reading, it is not possible to set up standards in terms of numbers of words a minute against which the child's reading can be checked. Many of the standardized reading tests published for the intermediate grades have checks of reading rate from which the child's position in relation to others of his reading level can be secured. Even these scores must be used with caution, because they indicate the child's performance only when he is working with materials and with questions similar to those used in the test.

A rough picture of the range in reading rates can be secured by noting the order in which the members of a reading group complete a given selection. Children who consistently finish last are likely to be those who will benefit from activities designed to increase their speed. Other evidence of unduly slow reading can be secured by watching the order in which children finish other assignments; by looking for a pattern of well-done but unfinished work on standardized or classroom tests; by studying oral reading for poor phrasing, which is sometimes a clue to a word-by-word approach to reading-matter; and by watching for signs of vocalization or pointing. Children who finish well ahead of the group can be studied in a similar fashion for evidence of too rapid reading—not being able to report at least the general gist of what is read, missing obvious details, making a hit-and-miss pattern of errors which bears little relationship to the increasing difficulty of the questions on a test, or reading aloud in a fashion that shows little sensitivity to meaning.

Change of pace is also important to note. Does the child who does such a satisfactory job of careful note-taking shy away from long recreational books because it takes too much time to finish them? How

effective is the avid reader of stories when he reports his share of a group project calling for exact information? As a child works his way through a single reference book for information, does he start at the first page and read his way ploddingly through to what he actually needs or does he use some short cuts? Such surveys will indicate some children who need special help, but will identify many others who have learned to adapt their reading rate to their needs in the normal course of learning to handle materials of increased variety and difficulty.

Make sure the child has related skills important in effective reading rate. Causes of ineffective reading rate are many. One of the most important is lack of clear purpose. The child who does not know what he is looking for may, on the one hand, skip important details because he does not recognize their value or, on the other, plod laboriously through his reading trying to pay attention to everything. It is clear purpose, also, that allows the reader to use efficiently such aids to skimming as chapter and section headings, topic sentences, and chapter summaries. On the other hand, inability to use these basic reference aids can result in ineffective reading rate even when the reader knows exactly what he is looking for. Inability to understand material, inadequate techniques of word analysis, and lack of the experience background from which to interpret what is read, are other important obstructions to effective reading speed. Typically, with adults as well as with children, the more difficult the material the slower the rate.

Even when materials are easy and purposes are clear, some children may have adopted a word-by-word approach to their reading. Sometimes this is accompanied by vocalizing or by pointing to the words one at a time. This is both slower and less meaningful than reading in phrase units. The practice of vocalizing has the general effect of holding the child's silent-reading speed to the rate at which he can read aloud. In some cases, these immature techniques may have lingered from the time when they served a useful purpose at the primary level. An overly heavy oral approach to reading in the primary grades may be another possible cause. Working with difficult materials where hard words prevented the development of ability to read in phrase units may be still another. Whatever the cause, when crutches such as vocalization are still being used, slow speed is almost always the result.

Poor eye movements are sometimes listed as a cause for slow read-

ing speed. Photographic records of eye movements indicate that the eyes progress across the printed page in a series of short hops. The larger the amount of material taken in at a single glance and the fewer the regressive movements, or backward looks, the more effective the reading usually is. However, these movements are not regular. It is the reader's comprehension of the printed page that seems to determine how his eyes move. The skillful reader catches appropriate phrase units in his glance. His eyes light on key words. The position of the key word or the phrase determines where his eyes will stop. The poor reader typically has poor eye movements—he looks at one word at a time, looks several times at a word to pronounce it or get its meaning, or loses his place and has to look back over what he has read.[1] Activities designed to secure more effective reading rate need to concentrate, then, not on devices to help the eyes move in mechanical rhythm, but on experiences which make for better word recognition and ability to see key words and phrase units as reading progresses.

Provide practice in reading rate focussed at the point of difficulty. All the foregoing sources of difficulty need to be kept in mind in planning practice activities to secure more effective reading rate. Again, a basic first step is to make sure that children know the purposes for which they are reading. In the interests of effective speed, it is often helpful to discuss with a group how they will need to read in order to achieve their purposes. "There are many books for you on the library table. How could you skim so as to find those which will be most helpful to your group?" "Before you do anything else, suppose you read this story, just thinking whether it would be a good one to share." "This is a good description of lobster fishing, but you are going to have to read carefully or you will miss some of the steps." Such discussions not only help children to become aware of good reading techniques, but they help the teacher to identify inadequate ones.

A second fundamental aid to the development of effective reading speed is the provision of quantities of easy, interesting material. If the words of a story are well within a child's grasp, the sentence structure is simple, and the story is one that holds his attention and pulls him along because of his interest, he is much more likely to increase

[1] A helpful recent summary of the studies of eye movements can be found in Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn, *The Psychology of Teaching Reading*, pp. 101–137. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952.

his speed. Easy recreational reading provides useful experience in rapid reading because the child is not slowed by the need to look for special information or to check carefully for details. In the content fields, also, a child can develop more effective reading speed if he is not hampered by unduly hard words and complicated style.

When slow reading is occasioned by inadequate word meanings or poor word-analysis techniques, there can be little pressure for increased rate until such time as the word-study problem has been solved. If it is desirable to help the child develop techniques of rapid reading at the same time that he conquers a word-study problem, he will need to be provided with very easy material for practice purposes.

The too rapid reader also needs help. Some of the most effective activities to teach such a child to read more carefully are those that require reading for details or following directions. This is one case where it is sometimes helpful to use a series of detailed questions to check on the accuracy of the child's reading without giving him any advance warning of what he should have been looking for. Sometimes more difficult reading or more challenging problems are helpful if the too rapid reader happens to be an intelligent child who is relying mainly on his general intellectual ability and on minor context clues. Once in a while, the child who is seemingly a careless rapid reader is actually one who finds the material difficult and who is hiding his inability to handle it by seeming to skim through it. Diagnostic insights based on a study of each individual are a first step in planning for practice.

Activities for the slow reader whose problem seems to be a laborious word-by-word approach should, for the most part, be planned with interesting passages—basal-reader stories, workbook paragraphs, articles from children's newspapers. Such mechanical devices as phrase cards may be used to demonstrate the value of seeing more than one word at a glance, but they fail to give the experience in purposeful reading which is one of the essential elements in learning to vary one's reading speed.[2]

The type of question that encourages rapid reading calls for a general reaction to the passage. Detailed reading, unless the details are very obvious, requires slower speed. Since part of the skill is to learn to read for specific purposes, questions are more useful if stated before

2 Eloise B. Cason, *Mechanical Methods for Increasing the Speed of Reading.* Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 878. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943.

the child begins to read. If ability to vary pace is desired, the questions can call for several specific details, which the child first skims to locate and then reports accurately. Often timing the reading so that the child is under a little pressure to read rapidly and graphing progress so that he can see himself improving are devices helpful to the slow reader. If the timing can be arranged so that a child is allowed to finish a selection, it makes for better comprehension than if the reading is stopped arbitrarily at the end of a given number of minutes. Among the specific activities that are helpful are the following:

Questions helpful as checks on comprehension when rapid reading is desired ask for: Telling the general gist of the story; checking how the main character felt; checking what the story was about or what the best title for it would be; answering obvious questions of fact; answering obvious questions about what a key character did or what kind of person he was.

Methods of timing convenient for classroom use are: Writing the time on the board in ten-second intervals and letting the child copy the numbers he sees as he finishes, having the children raise hands as they finish a selection and jotting down the time; allowing the group to read for a determined amount of time and then counting the words each child has read, using a standardized reading test of speed; letting reading partners time each other.

Children can be helped to see the value of reading in phrases by: Reading aloud to the child while he follows silently, if his silent speed is slower than the teacher's oral speed, demonstrating phrase units by flash cards; typing all but the climax of an interesting sentence, and flashing this to the child in a phrase; demonstrating phrase units by having him read a few passages typed so that phrase groups are separated; talking to him about eye movements; asking him to find the answer to a question phrased in the words of the book by looking down the page as rapidly as he can until he reaches the correct place; reading conversation, or other oral-reading activities where it is natural to use good phrasing.

Vocalization and pointing can be reduced by: Working with very easy material; having a group discussion on why one can go faster without these crutches; having the child put a finger to his lips as he reads; putting a lollypop, tongue depresser, or clean handkerchief in the mouth as a reminder; encouraging the child to suggest his own reminders; having the child hold his book in both hands so that pointing is not possible; asking the child to glance rapidly down the page looking for an obvious piece of information.

Activities to sharpen the use of reference techniques in developing more effective skimming are: Skimming a list of chapter titles and checking those that might help on a special problem; seeing who can find a

stated section in a standard reference book the most rapidly; locating a paragraph on a given topic by looking for topic sentences; listing the topic sentences in a series of paragraphs; using the index or table of contents in a given book to see who can find a stated topic the most quickly.

Habits of overly-careful detailed reading can be broken down by: Cutting down, if necessary, the number of classroom demands for detailed information; making assignments that call for the general impression of a paragraph—checking to see if these books might help us, leafing through the library books and seeing which one sounds the most interesting, listing on the board the pages that will help your group with your topic; asking the child to sort a group of newspaper clippings with clear headlines as rapidly as he can in terms of a given classification of topics; having children predict what an article in a children's newspaper will be about by skimming the headline and the opening paragraph; leading a class discussion about ways of finding information more rapidly.

IMPROVING SKILL IN ORAL READING

Consider the purposes served by oral reading. One of the recurring problems for many intermediate grade teachers is that of the appropriate use of oral reading. Teaching techniques have varied from those that make much use of oral work to those that allow very little. A common-sense solution to the problem can be arrived at by considering the uses of oral reading in everyday life.

Two clear-cut types of oral reading demand an audience. First, reading aloud is used in discussion to confirm or to illustrate an opinion. Oral reading of this sort makes up a good share of that done by most adults. Usually the passage is short. The reader finds in the daily paper, in a magazine, or in a book two or three sentences that illustrate what he has just been saying, and asks his audience to listen to them. This type of oral reading is not often practiced ahead of time, although the reader has usually read silently what he now reads aloud. It is used whenever the reader happens upon a passage that proves his point. Its effectiveness depends more upon the appropriateness of the passage selected than it does on the excellence of the reader's delivery. Second, oral reading of longer passages is used to entertain or to inform others. In these situations the audience is prepared to sit and listen. In some cases, the material will be a story, a play, or poetry, and the purpose to entertain. In others, it will be a report, a summary or review of a book, or the minutes of a meeting, and the purpose to give information. The participants may be a single child or a group. In these situations the reader, or readers, have the

opportunity to select the material ahead of time. The effectiveness of the presentation depends partly upon the choice of materials but mainly upon the skill with which they are read.

From the teacher's point of view, the diagnostic function of oral reading may be listed as a third purpose it can serve. Often the most helpful way of identifying the exact trouble when a child is having difficulty pronouncing words or is using poor phrasing is to have him work aloud. This type of oral reading is not meant for an audience. It is an experience to be shared by the child, his teacher, and perhaps the members of a sympathetic reading group interested in helping each other.

A fourth use of oral reading, for many readers, is to aid comprehension and word recognition when materials are difficult. Primary teachers are familiar with this need. Many beginners seem to benefit from hearing, as well as seeing, what they read. Adults often mumble to themselves when reading becomes hard. Vocalization is properly frowned upon as a hindrance to reading speed, but it is not necessary to become disturbed if a good reader occasionally resorts to this device. The child who needs help is the one who uses it as a regular habit. There will even be times when the teacher may encourage a child to try a difficult passage aloud or read it to him, if he seems unable to correct an error in pronunciation or in emphasis by rereading silently. Like oral reading for diagnostic purposes, this type of oral reading does not call for an audience. Teachers occasionally feel that a book which is too difficult for comprehension when it is read silently will be understood if children take turns reading it aloud. While this procedure may provide an opportunity to give help with hard words, it is doubtful if it is nearly as effective a way of conveying the information as telling it to the children or reading it aloud well to them.

Teaching of oral reading needs to be planned to allow for experiences both with the reading of short passages to illustrate and confirm opinions, and with the reading of longer selections to entertain or inform. The responsibility of the teacher is to provide the opportunities where each is appropriate, to know the kind of material that is suitable in each case, and to vary the audience situation with the purpose for which the material is being read. With intermediate grade children the development of skill in reading longer stories, poetry, and drama in audience situations is a particularly important point of focus, since these older children now possess the underlying word-recognition techniques and the other reading skills needed for effec-

tive oral presentations. This is the type of oral-reading activity in which practice to develop new skills is most likely to be needed. Reading to confirm or to illustrate an opinion does not require so high a degree of competence in reading aloud, although it provides valuable practice in selecting appropriate passages for special emphases.

Many intermediate-grade teachers feel that it is important to do a certain amount of oral work for diagnostic purposes in reading-group situations. While it is true that much can be learned about a child's difficulties by this procedure, the very fact that errors are anticipated means that difficult materials have to be read. This makes for a situation in which a child is likely to be embarrassed by the presence of an audience and in which the members of the audience have little interest unless they, too, are concerned with the diagnostic process. Although it is possible to develop in a group a spirit of helpfulness and a willingness to let others point out errors, intensive diagnostic work through oral reading is usually best done when the child and teacher work together away from the rest of the group.

Even less than in the primary grades is there need for the round-robin approach to a story where each child reads aloud, often without previous preparation. Not only is it important to set up reading activities where the child learns to use silent-reading techniques but it is equally important to keep out of the oral reading situation the possible negative attitudes associated with listening to oneself and one's friends make mistakes, waiting one's turn, taking too long to finish a story since it would go much faster silently, or waiting patiently while a story that has just been read silently is read again aloud. Diagnostic clues can be secured in sufficient number as children report on what they read silently, pronounce unfamiliar words listed for them on the chalkboard as part of the introduction of a new unit, read aloud short passages in answer to questions, or work together aloud for the legitimate purpose of preparing to share a story with another group. There will be, however, occasions when a reading group will take turns in reading a story aloud, just for the fun of participating, without any particular regard for developing a presentation for an audience and without undue concern for the degree of skill shown by each of the group members. Usually this sight oral reading will be with relatively easy material, or with stories in which the hard words have already been studied through silent-reading activities.

Identify the skills needed for oral reading. Oral reading has its own set of techniques. These were outlined in brief when the objectives of reading instruction in the intermediate grades were discussed

in Chapter X. It calls, first, for successful pronunciation of unfamiliar words. In silent reading the child may take time to work out the analysis of a difficult word. In an oral presentation he loses his audience or fails to make his point if he hesitates too often or too long. The practices of using simpler materials when a long selection is to be read aloud and of giving the reader an opportunity to scan the material silently before he reads aloud, and in many cases to rehearse, provide safeguards at this point.

The skilled oral reader must also be able to read in appropriate phrase units. This calls for ability to keep the eyes far enough ahead of the voice to foresee both phrasing and hard words. The child who sees only the words he is in the act of pronouncing rarely reads smoothly. A rough measure of eye-voice span can be secured by sliding a card unexpectedly over the child's book or by having a child close his book at a given signal and seeing how many additional words he can give correctly. The skillful oral reader typically can complete the phrase he was in the act of reading, and often can give the next one. This device also acquaints the child with the desirability of keeping the eye ahead of the voice in reading aloud.

In reading stories to an audience, there are the added tasks of using the voice to carry the humor, suspense, or excitement that the author intended without distracting the attention of the listener from what is read to the person reading. In reading conversation, the skilled reader needs to be able to create the character he is representing. Poetry presents the new problem of expressing the rhythm of the poem without sacrificing mood or expression to a choppy emphasis on meter and rhyme. When several children work together in a choral-reading presentation they must learn how to use solo and chorus voices effectively, when louder and when softer voices are appropriate, how to build climaxes, and how to use rhythm effectively. Skills such as these are the special responsibility of the intermediate and high school grades.

For some children, being before an audience adds other types of problems. There is need to make oneself heard. This may entail learning how to hold a book so that one's voice is not muffled and developing sufficient courage to look at one's audience. Standing properly in front of an audience, knowing what to do if one makes a mistake, and waiting one's turn in a group presentation add other types of difficulties. These are all part of becoming skilled in reading aloud.

Speed, in oral reading, is a matter of achieving a rate which is

effective in conveying meaning. Typically a child's oral reading rate should be approximately that at which he normally speaks. Only rarely will there need to be any pressure for increased speed. More often the task will be one of encouraging him to read more slowly and distinctly.

It is often helpful to prepare a check list of oral-reading skills to serve as a guide in working with a group. For diagnostic purposes such a list would concern itself chiefly with the child's ability to pronounce difficult words, his attack on new words, where and why he repeats, how well he phrases, and other evidences of reading skill. For guiding growth in audience situations the list would center more upon techniques that are needed to hold an audience—ability to read with expression, poise in front of an audience, clearness of enunciation, quality of voice. Children will grow in their insight into good oral reading if they help to prepare such lists. Classroom bulletin boards often display charts entitled *How to Make a Good Report*, *What Makes a Good Story Teller*, *How to Be a Good Audience*, *Things to Remember When We Read Aloud* Such lists can serve both as a guide for preparing an oral presentation and as a basis for subsequent evaluation.

Provide materials and settings appropriate to the oral-reading task. Problems of choosing the materials and settings for oral reading activities are more easily solved when the type of oral reading is kept in mind. Activities calling for the reading of a few lines to answer a question or to confirm an opinion seldom need any special adjustment of material or special plans for the audience. Children read from the books they have been using to solve the problem at hand Under discussion may be a basal reader story or group of stories, a short paragraph from a work type activity, a social studies or science text, or a reference book. The audience is the particular group interested in the problem. All may have their books open, if a common text is being used, and all may check on the reader or read other statements in their turn. At other times the audience may listen as each child reports on a book that has been his particular assignment Typically, the reader has scanned the material silently, but he seldom has done much careful preparation for his oral contribution. Little tension is produced by the audience situation because the selection read is very short and others are doing the same thing. Often the group is sitting in an informal circle and, while the reader may stand to be heard, he rarely needs to assume a lonely place in the front of the classroom.

When the situation is one of presenting a story, a report, or a dramatization to an audience, more care is needed in choosing materials and in planning for the oral-reading experience. The task of holding an audience demands interesting material. Insofar as possible, it should be unfamiliar to the listeners—a story or play in the basal readers reserved for a particular reading group, a library book that is new to the group, a play written by the children themselves, social-studies reports developed by a small group for presentation to the class as a whole, the minutes of the meeting of the class club, or the report of the special group who went on an excursion. Never should an audience in this type of situation sit with open books checking on the performers. Since skillful reading is important to hold the attention of the audience, the materials should be easy for the performers to read. Reports growing out of units of work in content fields usually meet this criterion if the children are encouraged to use their own words and to avoid copying verbatim from their reference books. Stories from basal readers, plays, poems, and selections from library books can be evaluated for difficulty as one step in deciding whether they are appropriate to share with the class. Choice of reasonably short selections is another aid in holding an audience. Even with careful selection of materials, performers should not go before the audience unprepared. This is the type of oral-reading situation most likely to produce tension. The participant deserves to feel thoroughly at home with what he reads, and he owes it to his audience to be well prepared.

Adjust teaching emphases to the needs of each oral-reading situation. The type of help given by the teacher will vary with the demands of the particular oral-reading situation. When the selections read are very short and the setting informal, there is not much opportunity to emphasize the fine points of phrasing and inflection. Stress is likely to be upon appropriate selection of what is read in terms of the problem. "Where did you find it?" "Can you prove that?" "I don't think that's what it meant." "What part of the story was it in?" "My book said . . ." are the types of questions and comments that call for the brief oral report. However, this informal situation offers an opportunity to give help in many of the fundamentals of good oral presentation. Children can be expected to make themselves heard, to use acceptable phrasing, and to pay attention to punctuation. In this informal sharing, suggestions designed to help the audience understand can be offered without unduly embarrassing the reader. "Would you read that just a little louder, it was hard to

hear." "Didn't he read the wrong country? My books say Australia, not America." "Try to read your choice of the scary part so that it really scares us." This informal give-and-take also helps children get used to the idea of making their points before an audience without the pressure that comes from a more lengthy presentation.

When longer selections are being prepared for an audience, much effective practice can be secured in the small group in which the project arose. If several children are to share in the presentation, they form a natural group to set standards, to act as a critical audience for rehearsal purposes, and in other ways to help to polish the performance. Many insights into good oral reading can be developed in these group sessions. In making their plans the children may discuss what makes a good report, a good story to share, or a good dramatization. Insights into different methods of presentation can be developed—a story could be dramatized, each child could read a selected number of paragraphs, one person could read to a climax and ask the audience to guess what would happen next, a series of climaxes could be used this way, people could read the conversation, reports could be given in panel form, pictures might help the presentation, a solo and some choruses could be used in a poem. In practicing for the oral performance the group members can help each other. Sometimes two or three persons may try out a part or a method of presentation. Group discussion can analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the various interpretations. Situations have also been described where groups interested in better oral reading laid plans for extended practice using check sheets, reading partners, or a tape recorder as aids in evaluating progress. These intensive work sessions can do much to help a child become accustomed to listeners while he receives help with his part of the presentation.

Make special provision for working with poetry. Of all the oral-reading situations, those calling for reading poetry are among the ones requiring the most skill. Too often the reader emphasizes the rhythm and rhyme of the poem to the exclusion of the mood and the meaning. One important aid is to hear poetry well read by the teacher on many occasions. It is also helpful to give the child informal opportunities to learn to recite poems long before he tries to read much poetry aloud. These may be the chorus of a specially liked poem in which his group has learned to join; or a short stanza about rain, snow, spring weather, or foggy days that he has heard his teacher repeat so often he has gradually learned to say it with her. The child

who comes to the reading of poetry with such experiences as background is likely to have more sensitivity for what the author of a poem is trying to convey.

Reading a poem aloud to children before they try to read it for themselves sometimes helps to offset tendencies toward exaggerated rhythm. Having children read the poem silently first, discussing it, deciding what the author is trying to express, and picking out particularly interesting lines can help as background for oral work. In reading a poem aloud, several children may suggest different interpretations. This technique is particularly helpful in developing choral-speaking presentations. As children discuss the need for solo voices, the places for increased emphasis, ways of getting contrasts, and ways of speaking that convey the meaning of the poem, they can try out the various suggestions. One group learned much by developing in blank verse their own creative summary of their study of the opening of the West. This unit was particularly rich in its combination of experiences in creative language, social studies, oral reading, and choral speech.[3]

Provide for an attentive audience. An appreciative audience makes an important contribution to good oral reading. In part, this can be achieved by discussing with the children standards of good audience behavior. Sometimes at the end of a presentation the participants can be asked how the audience helped them. Sometimes an audience can evaluate itself. Situations when the class is invited to a program given by another room can be used for discussions of how guests should behave. Assembly programs offer other opportunities for consideration of audience behavior.

Some consideration needs to be given to the quality of the performance presented to an audience. Well-prepared performers, interesting and new material, and a reasonably short presentation have been suggested as aids in securing a successful presentation. At times a group has been helped to set better standards by a frank discussion of why the audience became restless.

Tension before an audience can be reduced if critical comments are not requested. When a small group has worked hard on a presentation, there will be ample opportunities for critical interactions among those directly involved. The larger audience can then confine its comments to questions on points of interest, statements about

[3] Gertrude M. Coles, "Enrichment of Social Studies by Choral Speech." Unpublished Master's Field Project. Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 1951.

things especially well done, questions about how the group worked, contributions to general discussion from their own related experiences, and other types of participation which avoid direct criticism of the performers.

Help the shy child gain confidence. Even with an informal situation and a sympathetic audience, a shy child may have difficulty reading before others. There are many ways of giving support. It is often helpful to encourage participation in a small group first. Experiences in answering questions and reading short selections in an informal discussion group can provide an easy start. If the child is one of the poorer readers, it may be well to encourage him to begin by telling what he has read in his own words rather than by reading aloud. Thorough preparation when oral reading is undertaken will also help. On occasion, the teacher may work with the child alone in order to be sure that his performance before the group is successful. Easy materials and short selections often help.

In coming before the class as a whole, the shy child may first have a non-speaking part, perhaps as one of a group –one of the seven dwarfs, one of the mischievous children in the family, or even one of a grove of trees whose sole responsibility is to sway in the wind. First oral attempts before the entire class may also be easier if the child is with others—reading part of a story telling about one of several pictures, or reading one part of a report on a social-studies panel. Something to hold or point to can help—a picture one has drawn, a piece of science equipment, a chart, or the illustrations from a favorite book.

In a classroom where a relaxed and cooperative atmosphere has been developed, children can be helped to understand each other's problems and to give sympathetic help. One group promised not to look at a shy child as he spoke his first lines on a large stage so that they would not make him nervous. The child's delight in his success was no greater than that of his friends. Another group took care to give generous approval of each success of a child who was gradually overcoming oral-reading difficulties. A third group divided to form practice partners in such a way that good readers could help the poorer ones. In these atmospheres the shy youngster is not so hesitant to try his wings.

Supply ample opportunities for oral reading. An essential element in the development of skillful oral reading is a genuine need to share with others, whether it be a line or two to settle an argument or a

favorite book. These oral-reading experiences do not represent an isolated expenditure of time since, in many cases, they help to culminate silent-reading experiences growing out of unit activities, provide outlets for creative-language experiences, or make it possible to share recreational reading. Many types of oral-reading activities are suggested in the reading units discussed in Chapter XI. Opportunities such as the following deserve consideration:

Opportunities for reading stories are found in: Sharing recreational reading with other groups; sharing a basal-reader story with other reading groups; taking part in a library hour during a noon recreation period; reading original stories developed through creative-writing experiences; planning a special program for another class; sharing appropriate stories as part of a holiday celebration.

Oral reading related to dramatization can be encouraged through: Reading a story aloud as group members pantomime the action; reading parts of a story or a play as a reading-group activity; sharing a favorite story with other groups as a play, a radio performance, a television show; summarizing a social-studies unit with a play.

Experiences with poetry can be secured through: Sharing poems during a poetry period or a noon sharing time; developing a program for other classes by means of a tape recorder; using poems as part of a Christmas program; reading favorite poems to other reading groups as choral-speaking presentations; reading original poetry; developing original choral-speaking presentations as part of the summary of a unit.

Reading reports aloud is called for in: Reading current news articles; reading the minutes of a club meeting; reading individual or group reports as part of the summary of a social-studies unit; reading special announcements to other classes; sharing book reports during a library hour; reading aloud group plans for a special activity.

DEVELOPING MORE SKILLED APPROACHES TO WORD STUDY

Word recognition, meaning, and analysis are the three-fold emphases of the word-study program of the intermediate grades, just as they are in the primary grades. However, the relationships among them change for the child who has made typical progress. Words with unfamiliar meanings, which were carefully controlled in primary reading materials, appear in increasing number now. This heavier vocabulary load is occasioned not only by the new concepts of the various content fields but also by the greatly extended scope of the topics included in basal readers, the wide range of books available for recreational reading, and the many types of incidental reading done by older children. Whereas the task of learning to recognize a

word at sight or to work out its pronunciation is, for a first-grader, rarely complicated by an unfamiliar meaning, the more skilled reader often finds his problem a combined one. Word-recognition techniques now serve mainly to help secure the instant recognition of words, by configuration and small clues, that makes for the skilled, rapid reading of the adult. Word-analysis skills, which become a gradual point of focus as primary children gain the reading background needed for the identification of word-parts, now are indispensable as the reader makes independent attacks on his varied reading problems.

All three of these areas call for planned activities in the intermediate grades. The reading tasks undertaken by older children require word-study skills that could not have been developed completely through the reading-matter of the primary grades. Furthermore, these more mature readers have the intellectual ability to understand technical aspects of the construction of the English language that would have served little purpose earlier.

In many classrooms, and particularly in fourth grades, the word-study problem will be complicated by the fact that some of the children will not have grasped the fundamentals of word analysis typically developed in primary grades. Immaturity, illness, moving from school to school, unfortunate experiences when the first steps toward word analysis were taken, and habits of relying too heavily on the general configuration of the word and on context clues may be among the causes. For these children, the word-study program will need to be begun at the level that represents their present accomplishment. This may mean using some of the procedures suggested in Chapter IX for work with primary children.

Building Word Meanings

Help children meet the word-meaning demands of daily reading experiences. The trends that characterize the growth of the primary child's stock of word meanings also characterize the growth of the vocabulary of the older child. New problems, too, can be identified as children face the increased vocabulary of intermediate-grade materials. First, the number of new terms continues to increase as children read about the far West, a trip to the moon, the animals of Africa, how to keep a simple budget, how to care for pets, or how to build an amateur radio set. Second, familiar words continue to take on new meanings. A *period* may be a punctuation mark or a time

block in the day's schedule. A *governor* may be someone at the head of a government or a device to control the speed of a car. Third, a single meaning for a word continues to be enriched. A wagon may be a child's toy, something used by a farmer, a mode of conveyance in pioneer days, or a police car. Fourth, derivatives of familiar words begin to appear more frequently—care*ful*, care*less*; *mis*place, *re*place, place*ment*; *dis*cover, *un*cover, *re*cover. Fifth, many abstract terms begin to be used—*democratic, dictatorial, cooperative, sympathetic.* Sixth, because English is a living language, new terms are being coined. Some of these meet the needs of our changed social and scientific world, some are made popular by sports or other feature writers, some represent the gradual adoption of slang expressions—*telecast, blitz, robot, O.K., a grounder.* Finally, as the maturing reader explores the daily paper he meets terms that have acquired emotional tones for advertising, propaganda, or other purposes—*drastically reduced, liquidate, un-American.* There may also exist the added problem of lack of the experience background that makes these new terms live. How does it feel to ride in a *covered wagon*? How tall would a *pyramid* be? Is our school ground larger or smaller than an *acre*? Does *democracy* mean more than merely taking a vote? What is it like to live in a *slum*? If we had *German, Japanese, Canadian* visitors would they be different from ourselves?

Children grow in their grasp of new terminology partly through their wide reading, and partly through the sensitivity to new words that is developed in a stimulating classroom atmosphere. The teacher who helps children develop a rich vocabulary and a precise choice of words is, above everything else, alert to the day-by-day possibilities for vocabulary development in her room. Children can be helped to sense when one of their classmates has used a particularly apt expression or when their reading has introduced an unusual term. They can talk about words that are unfamiliar in a basal-reader story. After an excursion, new terminology can be listed and in some cases additional reading done to clarify concepts. Creative writing can be evaluated, in part, for effective choice of words. In oral reading situations it is often helpful to check on the child's understanding of the meaning of a word that he is having difficulty pronouncing, since part of his pronunciation problem may lie in the fact that he is trying to read a word he has never heard before. "Tell it in your own words." "What do you think that means?" are useful checks. Children, too, can learn to listen for unfamiliar words in an oral report and to chal-

lenge the speaker if he seems to be using terminology of which he is unsure. Encouragement to see if one can get the meaning of the new term from the context, its root, or its prefix or suffix is stimulating. Children can be given special recognition when they use a recently learned term in their conversation or written work. Consistent use of the dictionary and the attitude of "Let's look it up" are other useful teaching aids. Occasional check tests built in the pattern of the typical vocabulary test may be used. Children may also help to decide which of a group of new terms are important enough that they should be added to the class spelling list. All the words that are part of a child's reading vocabulary will not, of course, become part of his writing or his active oral vocabulary. However, the general classroom atmosphere should be one that encourages interest in learning to use new words, not merely passive acceptance of meanings in a context setting.

Make special provision for the new vocabulary of the content fields. The typical problems of word meaning occurring in the materials of the various content fields were described in Chapter XI—technical terms, technical meanings for familiar terms, concepts which demand experience background for clear understanding, special symbolism, unfamiliar personal and place names. The problem of developing word meanings in the content fields differs from the general problem of vocabulary building in degree only. Many of the techniques that have just been discussed will serve equally well for a unit of work planned around experiences in science, social studies, or arithmetic. However, the problem is complicated in several ways. First, new terminology in a content field is likely to be met in quantity. One cannot read much about Indians, for example, without encountering *buffalo, tepee, tomahawk, buckskin, tribe.* Second, the new terms are likely to be among the key words in the material and the child who does not know them may have trouble getting much of the meaning of what he is trying to read. Third, whenever the area is one in which the child's experience background is limited, an important aid to deducing the meaning from context is lacking. Fourth, the new terms may be those with which the child has had only the most limited acquaintance through other reading experiences or through conversation around the home. Fifth, the word-analysis task of working out the pronunciation may be difficult. This is true particularly of personal and place names. Consider, for example, *Genoa, Ponce de Leon, Puerto Rico, Montezuma, Aztec* and the many others

that could appear in a short unit on explorers. As was suggested in Chapter XI, careful selection of materials can solve part of the vocabulary problem in the content fields, but even when this precaution has been taken, special plans are often needed to give help with new terms.

Suggestions for introducing new words ahead of time so as to simplify the problems of reading for information in a unit of work in a content field were given in Chapter XI. Classes can also participate in word-meaning activities as reading proceeds. Often the children help to extend a word list as they encounter new terms. One such list contained all the words that the children felt were specially important to Mexico. In another group, each child made his own glossary, with picture illustrations, of the words that most interested him. The children in one sixth grade made a picture dictionary of their most important words, small groups being responsible for a card with a clear picture, a written meaning, and the pronunciation key for each of the words on their list. A fourth grade made a pronunciation key of Spanish words learned in a study of Mexico and gained additional experience by putting the words in alphabetical order. The committee groups in another class agreed that as part of each report all special terms, with the proper pronunciation keys would be written on the chalkboard so that they could be referred to as the report was being given. One science group prepared diagrams to illustrate a set of new terms. Another made labels for each object in a classroom display. All these activities help to keep new words before the children until they are thoroughly familiar with them. They also help the children to become sensitive to the need to expand their stock of word meanings.

Review activities can be of many sorts. In one social studies group the children prepared a series of riddles about the people on whom they had reported. Members of the listening audience were to answer the question, "Who am I?" Another group varied this approach with "What am I" riddles about important places, buildings, and objects. One teacher provided interesting factual reviews by typing descriptions on one side of a card and the name of the person, object, or place on the other. Children with free time played with these cards in pairs, one child asking the questions. The game was to see how many correctly answered cards one could amass. Another class worked out a "Twenty Questions" type of review. One remedial group with special word-recognition difficulties worked out a "Bingo" game with some

social-studies words. To have credit for one's "Bingo," one had not only to recognize the words on one's chart, but to answer any informational question about them asked by a member of the group. The "Bingo" idea was worked out more elaborately by a fourth-grade teacher whose children needed special help with word meanings by putting the words on the cards for the players and then reading the definitions of the words to them. Simpler checks can be made by preparing vocabulary tests in multiple-choice or completion form as part of the final evaluation of a unit. The more ways in which a child can be helped to work with a new term in an interesting fashion, the more likely he is to make it his own.

Give special consideration to concept formation. In the matter of vocabulary building, it is particularly important to create a classroom environment which provides the concrete experiences, the visual aids, and the freedom of inquiry needed for the development of clear concepts. Many of the community resources discussed in Chapter XI can be helpful. Sometimes it takes only a simple comparison to clarify a concept "A mile is about as far as from here to the post office." "Those trees would be about as tall as our building." "How many of us would it take altogether to weigh a ton let's add up our weights and see." "How long would a whale be? Let's hold hands down the hall and see how many it would take to stretch from its head to its tail." Words are abstractions. The reality lies in the object; the actual place with its noises, odors, and sights, the living animal. Concepts become clearer when children can have firsthand experiences or, next best, can see a film, a picture, or a model.

Plan practice activities that keep interest in word meanings high. One of the problems of planning special practice activities to enrich word meanings is that of keeping interest high and avoiding routine assignments to look up the meanings of lists of words or to write out lists of unfamiliar words encountered in reading Boring activities with words affect not only interest in new terms but often attitudes toward reading itself.

Special practice with word meanings can be of a work-type nature or it can be provided through short unit activities. Intermediate-graders can become much interested in studying word origins, in learning the history of place names or personal names, or in studying the special choice of words of a favorite author. Such short units can be independent of other activities or developed in relation to ongoing projects. Creative-language experiences offer other opportun-

ities to concentrate on effective use of words. Several kinds of work-type activities that can be planned as part of a unit of work have already been described. Other typical activities are given in the suggestions that follow:

Special short-term projects can focus on: Studying word origins and the history of interesting words; studying current school slang and its history; studying class first names or surnames and their origins or meanings; making a history of interesting place names in the community.

Creative-language experiences can develop sensitivity to word meanings through: Making a class list of "Quotation Helpers" to replace the word "said" in writing stories; dramatizing a list of quotation helpers to show where each would be most appropriate; filling in missing adjectives or adverbs in the blanks in a story to study how choice of modifying words can change meanings; studying a basal-reader story to identify effective choice of words; listening to records and writing down descriptive phrases to convey one's impressions of the music.

Special test situations can be set up by: Using games such as "Bingo" or "Twenty Questions", making up riddles; making simple crossword puzzles; playing anagrams, choosing the correct meaning for a word after reading it in a sentence context, seeing how many new meanings one can develop by adding prefixes and suffixes to given roots, taking multiple choice or matching tests where one checks synonyms or antonyms; matching meanings in two sets of sentences illustrating different uses of a word.

Developing Mature Techniques of Word Recognition

Meet the word-recognition needs of daily reading activities. Recognizing a word by its general configuration is sometimes thought of as a technique used only in the primary grades when a child learns new words at sight in order to have the satisfaction of reading independently at the time that the vocabulary load of his books is well beyond his limited word-analysis skills. Although the mature reader should be able to work out the analysis of a word for himself, or to turn to a dictionary or to a glossary for its pronunciation he, too, often uses instant recognition of a word from context and from obvious structural clues. Both rapid silent reading and skilled oral reading depend, in part, on the reader's ability to go ahead smoothly with few pauses for detailed word analysis. Most adult readers also have a stock of words—foreign place names, unusual personal names, unfamiliar technical terms—which they recognize by general configuration, but for which they find it difficult to give any adequate phonetic analysis. The intermediate-grade child has many of these typical adult needs for word-recognition skill. In addition, he has the

particularly difficult problem of acquiring rapidly the vocabulary of the content fields.

Primary teachers use two general approaches in building word-recognition techniques. One is to develop acquaintance with the new words before they are met in context. The other is to provide for repetition of the new terms in varied settings until the child is thoroughly familiar with them. These approaches, somewhat modified, are helpful also with the word-recognition problems of older children. The techniques in the preceding section for acquainting children with the meanings and pronunciation of technical terms and of personal and place names also help to build familiarity with the general configuration of new words. Lists of new terms, special labels on exhibits or pictures, individual notebooks, and word games help to provide needed repetition. Additional repetition of new terms in context can be given by using classroom experience records—to indicate plans, to summarize what has been read, to report on an excursion, or to provide a simpler version of materials in an adopted text.

Teachers at the early primary level introduce many new words by telling the child their pronunciation. This technique is discarded in favor of encouraging him to work out the pronunciation of words for himself as rapidly as he gains command of the necessary word analysis skills. In the intermediate grades, the approach to the first pronunciation of a new word should be, as far as possible, through word analysis, since the ultimate aim is to help the child become independent in his recognition of new words. With the controlled vocabulary of a basal reader, it should not often be necessary to tell a child the pronunciation of new words, although immature fourth-graders may still need this help if the story contains many unfamiliar names or technical terms in an area in which the children's experience background is limited. Materials in the content fields may cause more difficulty. If only a few words seem likely to be unfamiliar, the first reading of material will not be seriously impeded if the children are encouraged to stop to work out the pronunciation of new words as they come to them. Since this first reading is almost always silent, the teacher is free to help individuals who are having undue difficulty. When it seems wise to present words likely to cause trouble ahead of the time at which the material is read, the use of word-analysis skills can be encouraged by asking the children to see how many words on the list they can pronounce for themselves. With proper nouns, particularly, this is not always a desirable time expenditure for children with

limited word-analysis skills, but more skilled readers can be given many legitimate lessons in the interpretation of diacritical marks by being asked to use a pronunciation key placed on the chalkboard next to a list of new words, or to look up the words for themselves in a glossary or a dictionary.

In deciding how much help to give a child in the pronunciation of an unfamiliar word, his eventual use of the word needs to be kept in mind. A word that is likely to become part of a child's regular speaking and writing vocabulary, or one that presents word-analysis problems typical of those he will meet again, merits the time spent helping him to make a structural or phonetic analysis of it. On the other hand, a word that seems likely to have limited use, or presents a rare word-analysis problem may well be handled quickly by telling the child the pronunciation. Adjustments will also have to be made in the light of children's present word analysis skills. Those who are still using primary techniques will need more help. Furthermore, the greater the gap between any child's general reading level and the difficulty level of the particular material he is trying to read, the more likely it is that he will need additional help with unfamiliar words.

Plan practice activities that focus on mature word-recognition techniques. When special work-type activities are needed to develop skill in word recognition, they should serve one of two purposes. They may provide the repetition needed to develop easy familiarity with new vocabulary, or they may serve to sharpen those word-analysis techniques that enable the reader to use context clues and large word elements, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes, as an aid to quick recognition of unfamiliar terms. Ways of repeating new words are essentially the same as those that help to develop new word meanings through using the printed word in many settings and types of activities. Special practice to develop skill in rapid recognition of words by means of word analysis clues should be given, for the most part, in exercises in which the reader can use context clues. Various flash-card devices can help to demonstrate the word analysis techniques that are the most useful, but the task facing the reader ultimately is to be able to recognize the word in context, not in an isolated list.

The following are activities that help to build word-recognition techniques. In addition, many of the activities suggested for developing word meanings and word-analysis skills also help with word

recognition. Teachers should refer to these other sections as well. Activities for less skilled readers are found in Chapter IX.

Acquaintance with unfamiliar terms can be built through: Building a class list of new terms; labelling exhibits, diagrams, or pictures; writing reports or experience records using the new terms; taking matching or multiple-choice vocabulary tests; learning to spell selected new terms; working with riddles and other games focussing on new terms.

Ability to respond to key elements in words for rapid recognition can be developed through: Breaking compound words apart, or building compound words; building words by adding prefixes and suffixes to a given root; telling apart two similar words seen on flash cards or other tachistoscopic devices; telling which of two flashed words would end a given sentence correctly; filling in the correct words in blanks in a paragraph where only the key letters of the missing words have been supplied; pronouncing a list of place names as they are flashed.

Developing Advanced Word-Analysis Skills

Identify the word-analysis skills needed by mature readers. Even less than in the primary grades is it possible to foresee exactly what word-analysis problems skillful readers will face in the vocabulary load of their widespread reading activities. A general picture of the problems on which help is likely to be needed can be secured by examining the kinds of new words the children are meeting. They are longer, and the corresponding word-analysis task calls for working with two or more syllables. They contain sound elements that were not common in the primary grades. Among these are prefixes, such as *pre, ante, trans, sur, ad, ex;* and suffixes such as *tion, ious, ful, ible, less, ance.* Furthermore, there are more occasions when it is important for the child to know the meaning of the prefix or suffix, or to sense whether its function is to change the root to an adjective, a noun, or an adverb—*work, workable, rework; form, transform, formation; repeat, repetitive, repetition, repeatedly; talk, talkative.* In addition, the new words in the reading-matter of the intermediate grades more often present related problems of unfamiliar meanings or concepts beyond the children's experience. Furthermore, they tend to be met during reading activities where it is important to be able to use a glossary, a dictionary, or a pronunciation key provided in the context, if independent reading is to proceed unhindered.

The exact problems faced by the children in a given classroom will need to be identified as they work. There are several ways of keeping a tally of where the greatest difficulties lie. In giving help during

silent reading the teacher can jot down on a pad or on the chalkboard the words which cause trouble. This system makes it easier to underline syllables, to mark prefixes or suffixes, or in some other way to help the child to see key word-parts, and it also provides a list of the day's difficulties. Children working alone can be encouraged to write down difficult words and bring them to group sessions for help. As children try out their pronunciation skills on new words listed on the board for special study it is possible to make a record of the problems causing the most trouble. Sometimes difficulties in spelling give clues to unfamiliar sound elements. Children who are having the most trouble with word analysis may display an over-all weakness that suggests the need for systematic help with the word-parts usually learned in the primary grades. Out of such surveys should come a picture of the present status of the group—weaknesses where special help would be useful, points where incidental guidance is likely to be sufficient, or adeptness which suggests that a child is making satisfactory independent progress.

Encourage independence in daily reading activities. Since the ultimate aim of the word-analysis program is to help children become completely independent in their attack on new words, it is important that their experiences encourage independence as daily reading activities proceed. Because word-analysis techniques are interrelated both with word recognition and with the development of new meanings, a number of ways of building word-analysis skills were suggested in the two preceding sections. Whenever it does not interfere seriously with understanding, it is proposed that children be allowed to meet new words in context and to try to work out the pronunciation for themselves. When it seems desirable to present the new terms ahead of the reading, the suggestion is that children can be encouraged to see how much of the list they can pronounce without help and to use the pronunciation keys in dictionaries or glossaries. On-going reading activities can be used in other ways to foster an independent approach to new words. Oral-reading experiences in small groups prior to sharing a presentation with an audience can focus, in part, on word pronunciation. Sometimes reading partners can be given the responsibility of helping each other. Disagreements about how to pronounce words in a committee report can be settled by referring to a dictionary. Children reporting on current events can be held responsible for looking up unfamiliar words. Committee groups reporting on unit activities can be encouraged to give the audience special help

with the pronunciation of difficult terms. Lists of spelling words can be studied so that word-analysis skills are stressed.

In helping children with word-analysis skills during on-going classroom activities, the teacher's responsibility is partly one of encouragement and partly one of giving whatever help seems to be needed at the moment. "Cover the end of that word and see if you don't know the rest of it." "I think you can get that one if you'll look it up." "This ends the same way as *station*. Now can you get it?" "This part is a small word you know. Does that help?" "Remember what we said an *e* on the end of a word often did?' "You're almost right but it has three syllables. You skipped the part in here." Much depends on the credit given to children when they succeed. Children can learn to compliment each other, to take pride in their use of the dictionary, and to give special credit to the reader who is just beginning to show progress if the teacher's attitude is one of enthusiasm and frank appraisal. "I'm proud of you, Irene, you got that all by yourself." "I don't think you'll need special help with many of these. Let's see if you can't figure them out." "This is a hard book, could we have someone who is a good reader volunteer to work with this group so as to help with the hard words." "That's right, Jim. Tell us how you figured it out."

Correlate word-analysis activities with spelling. Poor spelling in the intermediate grades is sometimes explained by blaming poor word-analysis techniques. In actual fact, well-planned reading and spelling activities should supplement each other. Furthermore, spelling lessons often provide ideal settings for added experiences in word analysis, since they offer a purposeful opportunity to study the make-up of words.

Techniques suggested for learning to spell a word focus on correct pronunciation and careful attention to sounds and syllables. The following set of directions is illustrative of those given to older children in most spelling textbooks: [4]

1. Say the word, look closely at it as you say it and be sure to say all parts of the word distinctly.
2. Close your eyes and try to recall how the word looks, part by part, as you pronounce it in a whisper. Be sure to say all the parts carefully.

[4] Adapted from Arthur I. Gates and David H. Russell, *Diagnostic and Remedial Spelling Manual*, pp. 24–25. Revised Edition. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1910.

3. Open your eyes and look at the word again. Say it again distinctly as you look at it.
4. Close your eyes again and try to recall it, then open them and check again with the correct form of the word.
5. Write the word, saying it clearly to yourself as you write it.
6. Check the correct form to see if you wrote it correctly.

When this approach is used consistently, there are many opportunities to help children think about the proper analysis of a word.

Spelling activities can be used to build the habit of listening and looking for sounds and syllables. In one class the children worked as spelling partners, with a child who was good in word analysis assigned to help a child who was having trouble. In another, a group having trouble met regularly to work on spelling and word analysis problems. One device that children enjoy is the dictation of a long, phonetically easy word as a "bonus" word on the spelling list. Study of new words can be directed to elements helpful for word analysis. Children can be asked to list groups of words ending or beginning in the same sound. Prefixes and suffixes can be studied. Children can be encouraged to break words into syllables, to identify familiar roots, and to work out simple spelling and pronunciation rules. However, both in reading and in spelling children need to learn that all words do not follow rules. Here again, an approach that concentrates on significant pronunciation elements can be helpful. Special attention can be given to letter combinations such as *ight*, *ough*, *tion*, for example, and children can be helped to see that it is important to look for combinations such as double letters and for relatively rare sound combinations, such as *eo* in *people*, and *ai* in *aisle*. Many of these activities will be planned by the teacher to meet the special needs of her class. Most spelling textbooks offer other possibilities for word-study exercises. These are often used most effectively if the teacher will choose from among the entire set of activities proposed for a given lesson a few that focus on needed word analysis skills.

If word-analysis techniques are to operate effectively in spelling, it is important that spelling activities be planned so that children do not violate the word analysis principles they are trying to learn. Studying words by spelling them aloud, one letter at a time, or by copying them a given number of times may break down the habit of thinking of sounds or syllables in writing a word. Approaches to sound elements sometimes suggested in spelling textbooks do not agree with the corresponding reading approach. Sound elements such as *ea*, *ie*, *oa*

are treated as phonograms in reading. Occasionally in spelling exercises the child is asked to look for a "silent letter" in such words as br*ea*d, gr*ea*t, rec*ei*ve, bel*ie*ve. Teachers need, also, to use cautiously activities that ask children to fill in missing letters when these are written so as to break up a typical phonetic element, for example, *spe-l, c-arge*. Caution is also needed when a spelling exercise is so designed that the child need only read across the letters of the key word in the word list and then write a missing letter or syllable without thinking of pronunciation. Good word-analysis techniques are essentially the same for reading and spelling. It is important to plan so that the activities in these two fields reinforce each other.

Plan practice activities that assure independence in word analysis. There are many sources of practice activities in word analysis. Workbooks to accompany basal-reader series are replete with exercises. Sets of workbooks focussed entirely on word-study skills are available. Selected activities in spelling textbooks have also been mentioned. Many of these exercises are readily adaptable to the particular word study problems of a group.

Because the reader's eventual task is to be able to pronounce the word in its contextual setting, practice activities should include much work with words in context. Short work-type activities that call for the child to use context clues can be developed by asking him to complete a rhyme, to choose the word that correctly answers a riddle, to choose the word that correctly answers a question based on a short paragraph, or to determine the meaning of a compound word from its use in a paragraph and its component parts.

Various types of games and other activities with lists of words can also have value, particularly for children who need inducements to participate in extended word-analysis experiences. Many of the games and similar devices appropriate for primary children can be adapted to the needs of better readers by varying the difficulty of the words being used. In choosing or preparing such activities, it is just as important as it is in the primary grades to appraise the amount of actual reading experience provided for the children in proportion to the amount of time it takes to prepare the exercise, and the number of extraneous activities in which the children engage. Waiting in line to spin a pointer to see which word one is to pronounce, moving from base to base in a ball game, racing to the chalkboard ledge to get a word card or to put two syllables together to make a word, and other such activities offer a small amount of actual reading experience for

each child in terms of the time it takes to keep the activity moving.

The skilled reader needs to make efficient word-analysis skills his own as rapidly as possible. This means that he needs to be helped to become conscious of what he is doing. Word-analysis activities lose much of their value if they are not discussed in group situations so that children can think about what they are learning, compare different ways of working out words, and develop simple pronunciation rules.

Typical activities that help in developing word-analysis skills are given below. Teachers should also refer to the activities suggested for primary children in Chapter IX. Many of these are easily adaptable for more skilled readers.

Practice with sounds can be secured through: Completing rhymes; trying to pronounce all the words on a word wheel; preparing lists of words that begin or end with the same sound; trying to spell an unfamiliar word by listening to its sound elements; making up rhymes that stress a given sound; making special studies of prefixes, suffixes, or roots; choosing the correct word to complete a sentence or answer a riddle; studying spelling words in order to note unfamiliar sound elements.

Work with syllables can be given through: Looking up the pronunciation of a list of words needed for a unit in a content field; completing exaggerated rhymes where the number of syllables needed in the missing word is obvious; listening for the syllables in order to spell an unfamiliar word that is phonetically easy; studying a spelling word so as to identify its syllables; trying to count the syllables in a word by pronouncing it very distinctly.

Experience with roots, prefixes, and suffixes can be secured through: Helping to develop a short unit on word origins; building compound words and using them in a sentence to test their meanings; breaking apart lists of compound words; figuring out the meaning of compound words from their parts; trying to give meanings of words from the root and the context; seeing how many words one can make by adding prefixes or suffixes to a given word, and telling the meanings; making a list of opposites by adding a prefix such as *un* to a given list of words.

Developing Skill in Using the Dictionary

Survey the needs for dictionary usage of intermediate-grade children. Learning to use the dictionary is largely an intermediate-grade problem. Primary children are likely to become acquainted with a picture dictionary; second- and third-graders may have some experience in putting words in alphabetical order; but extensive dictionary use comes as children face a wider vocabulary load and become better able to spell the words they want to look up. One of the first im-

portant early uses of the dictionary is in looking up the meanings of words. Soon it becomes a resource for checking on spelling. As children become able to use diacritical marks a dictionary also becomes an aid to pronunciation. Gradually there may also be a certain amount of use of special features—pictures; lists of proper names; lists of abbreviations; information about roots, prefixes, or suffixes.

Because of the special format of a dictionary, teaching children to use it calls for the development of a number of new techniques. They must be able to place words in alphabetical order. Habitual use of guide words, while not essential, makes for much greater efficiency. Readers must also be able to choose, from three or four definitions, the one that is appropriate. To be able to use the dictionary as an aid to pronunciation it is necessary to recognize diacritical marks. Intelligent use of special features will also develop more effectively with appropriate help. One sixth grade, weary of identifying parts of speech, thought they had discovered a splendid short cut when they discovered that their dictionary classified each word. Unfortunately they copied down whichever part of speech was given first in the dictionary definition with no thought for how the word was used in their sentences.

Skillful use of the dictionary can be impeded by lack of other reading skills. Poor spellers are hampered. Children who cannot follow the general gist of a paragraph often cannot choose an appropriate meaning. Those with limited experience background sometimes find meanings phrased in terms too difficult for them, unless the definition is accompanied by a picture or a concrete illustration. A meager word-recognition vocabulary can also cause trouble if the meaning of a given word is phrased in terms equally unfamiliar. Because of the difficulties caused by lack of these related skills, it is sometimes desirable to start dictionary work with the glossary in a basal reader or in a speller where the total problem may be less complicated. A primary picture dictionary or a simplified beginners' dictionary may be of help in the first dictionary work of a fourth grade. Habitual use of the dictionary is not likely to develop until children have the related skills to handle it easily.

Make use of classroom opportunities for dictionary usage. Special work-type exercises will do little to build good habits of dictionary usage if the teacher does not take pains to encourage it in daily classroom activities. Routine assignments, such as writing the dictionary meanings of a list of spelling words whether one already knows them

or not, copying the dictionary pronunciation keys for a list of hard words, or looking up the syllabication of lists of words, should be avoided. Children need to learn to turn to the dictionary when there is a genuine problem. Dictionaries need to be available, if not in every desk at least in sufficient numbers that several children can work at one time. Even such a simple technique as placing dictionaries where they are easy to reach and in a place where it is convenient to work for a few minutes can be helpful.

Since the use of the dictionary is an integral aspect of the word-study activities of intermediate-grade readers, a number of possible classroom experiences have been suggested in preceding sections. Children can be asked to use a dictionary to check on the meanings of unfamiliar terms, to settle arguments about pronunciation, to try to find the spelling of a word needed in creative writing, and to get help on how to break a word into syllables for the purposes of hyphenation. Credit needs to be given to the child who can solve his own problems by using a dictionary. It often provides an extra incentive if a child is asked to look up a word for the class and given a special opportunity to report. "Let's look it up" needs to become a class motto.

Provide the special practice needed to develop efficient dictionary skills. Practice with the dictionary should come, in part, as children work with the actual books. When it is not possible to put one in the hands of each child, they may work in pairs, or groups may take turns. Some activities can be planned by using the smaller dictionaries in basal readers or in spellers which are often more readily available to every member of the class. Work type exercises focussed on such problems as learning to use alphabetical order can be set up by placing practice lists on the chalkboard. More elaborate practice sheets can be prepared by hectographing or mimeographing a sample of part of a dictionary page. Some children's dictionaries contain sets of special exercises designed to help children use them better. A basic guide in planning experiences with dictionary skills, as it is with other types of practice activities, is to provide exercises which focus as directly as possible on the type of skill the child will actually be using in solving a real problem. Among the activities that can be of help are the following:

Practice in choosing correct meanings can be secured through: Telling which of several meanings will fit best into a given sentence; trying to give sentences which use each of the meanings of a given word; matching

several meanings for the same word with sentences using the word in various ways, deciding which of several meanings is correct for a word encountered in classroom reading experiences

Skill with alphabetical order and guide words can be developed through Placing lists of words of varying degrees of difficulty in alphabetical order, seeing how close one can come to opening a dictionary at a given letter telling which letter comes before, after, or between given letters, telling which of several pairs of guide words would be used to look up each of a list of words, seeing how fast one can find a given word by using the dictionary guide words, looking up a given word and telling what guide words it was between

Ability to use diacritical marks can be developed through Marking the long and short vowels in a list of familiar words, putting in the accents correctly after pronouncing a list of familiar words, looking up the pronunciation of unfamiliar words, making a simple pronouncing key for a list of important classroom terms

Acquaintance with other aspects of the dictionary can be secured through Spending a class discussion period examining the way in which a dictionary is made up looking up the meanings of prefixes, roots, and suffixes discussing the use of pictures or other aids as they bear on a classroom problem that took the child to the dictionary

PROVIDING FOR EFFICIENT REFERENCE TECHNIQUES

Since many of the problems of effective use of informational materials must be solved as classroom activities develop day by day, suggestions both of types of problems and of ways of working with children, were included in Chapter XI The discussions that take place as purposes are clarified for a new unit and plans are laid for the reading that needs to be done, and the individual and group guidance that is provided as the unit develops, are at the heart of the activities that build effective reference techniques These daily experiences are the more valuable because children are reading for purposes that are important to them and learning ways of adjusting their study techniques to real problems Specially planned practice activities can serve to give intensive experience with new techniques and can help to focus discussion sharply on specific problems This section suggests ways of providing this additional practice for three groups of reference techniques— problems of reading informational materials in the content fields problems of locating information, and problems of outlining summarizing, and note taking Among the suggested activities will be found some that can be developed as work type experiences and others that are new ways of using classroom experiences to develop specific reference skills

Providing Special Practice for Effective Reading in the Content Fields

Identify the reading demands being made by the materials in the individual classroom. A general description of the types of problems encountered in the reading matter of the content fields was given in Chapter XI. Each teacher has to decide the exact ways in which these problems are being faced by her class. This means making a two-way analysis. First, textbooks and other resource materials need to be studied in the light of the way children are likely to be using them—the types of problems they are trying to solve, the group plans they are making, or the assignments they are being given. Items such as unfamiliar terminology, new concepts, new symbolism, special aspects of format, unfamiliar visual aids, or unusual demands occasioned by writing style need to be noted. When a classroom is replete with materials, an analysis cannot be made of them all, but it is usually possible to study the books most frequently used and especially those that are likely to be in the hands of the poorer readers. The second aspect of the analysis needs to be concerned with the children as they begin their year's work. What is the range of reading skills? How well within the ability of the group does the bulk of the material seem to be? Are word-analysis techniques adequate for new terminology or will special help be needed? How efficient are the children when they try to locate the answers to a simple set of questions? How well do they use illustrative materials such as maps, graphs, pictures, diagrams, or illustrations? With a picture of the present status of her group and the types of materials they are going to have to read, the teacher is able to plan how to give them special help.

Make sure the child has related skills important for reading materials in the content fields. The skills needed for getting meaning from the materials of the content fields are closely interwoven with effective reading skills in general. At any point where children are having trouble—be it with word-analysis techniques, word meanings, following the general thought of a paragraph, locating details, or following directions—the difficulty is likely to be greater when the new features of the format, vocabulary, and style of the typical textbook in a content field come into the picture. In a study, now old but nevertheless still thought-provoking, Lee [5] pointed out that a child

[5] Dorris M. Lee, *The Importance of Reading for Achieving in Grades Four, Five, and Six*. Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 556. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933.

is likely to be handicapped if he comes to the extensive reading activities of the intermediate grades with a reading achievement score of less than 4.0. The added problems presented to the reader by the style and format of materials in the content fields offer one of the main arguments for keeping the general difficulty level of these books somewhat easier than that of the corresponding basal reader.

Ability to clarify a problem and to make critical selections of information in terms of it is particularly important for effective reading in the content fields. This may involve being able to describe what is wanted in an arithmetic problem or locating needed information from a chapter in a science text. For children who are engaged in their first ventures in wide reading of many resource materials, the task of pulling together information from several sources may complicate the problem of critical evaluation still further. Each new type of material and each new project is likely to pose a slightly different problem of critical reading.

Problems of interpreting graphs, maps, and other visual aids deserve particular attention in planning practice activities to develop reading skills in the content fields. Among the needed skills identified in Chapter XI were: interpreting legends; comparing relative sizes; interpreting percentages and other numerical concepts; identifying needed specific pieces of information; applying general knowledge about a visual aid to a slightly different version of it in a new text. Such problems often lend themselves particularly well to work-type activities

Provide practice in reading materials in the content fields in the light of specific needs. One important over all solution to the problems of reading informational materials is to adjust the reading task to the child's present ability. A typical fourth grade reader will not be expected to read as widely as a sixth grader. The questions he tries to answer will be less complicated. The material he uses will be more simply written. Then, too, the amount of help given to individuals and groups can be adjusted to the demands of the special problem. Ways of making these adjustments were outlined in Chapter XI.

Certain problems may well be the center of attention for several days for a group or for the entire class. In one class, need for help arose because of careless reading of arithmetic problems. The children took their textbooks and studied selected problems together, talking about why it was important to read carefully, and what to look for. Reading errors that had been common in a previous series

of exercises were used as a basis for the discussion. Then the children went on to some special reading activities—telling what the problem asked them to find; telling whether the final answer would be larger or smaller than the original numbers, and why; making special lists of key words that usually indicated subtraction, addition, multiplication, division; estimating about what the final answer would be, and telling why; telling what processes would be needed to solve the problem, and why. Some of these activities were done orally in class and some were carried out as work-type experiences planned in multiple-choice and true-false form.

Problems of securing information from graphs were tackled by the children in one sixth grade who discovered that some of the material they needed was presented in three or four simple but unfamiliar graph forms. Few of the children had much experience in interpreting material of this kind. In this situation the entire class worked together. The children discussed the purposes of graphs and how they are constructed. Two of the graphs from the reading material were placed on the chalkboard so that all might examine them together. After the children felt they knew how to read a graph, they went back to the context and tried to interpret it in the light of the graph. As they used different textbooks, they discovered that the same information in a graph could be evaluated differently by different writers, and learned more about interpreting specific information in its broader setting. This study, which began as a problem of understanding the visual aids in a specific piece of material, developed into a broader study of graphs through parallel arithmetic experiences. At this point arithmetic textbooks became a new resource, and the children eventually did several small school and community surveys on problems that interested them and presented their information in charts and graphs.

In a fourth grade, a special project developed the first time the children began to make extensive use of maps. This was a relatively new experience to many in the group. Parallel to other reading activities in social studies for two weeks ran a study of types of maps. These were selected so as to pose problems typical of those the children were meeting in their reading. They learned the difference between a political and a physical map. They worked with various types of legends and learned how to find items such as rivers, mountains, and important cities. A trip to a tall building in their city helped them get a picture of how a countryside actually looks from a distance. After

this visit they made their own map of their neighborhood and developed their own legend. This group also spent a little time thinking about the difference between maps and globes. This unit by no means taught these children all they would eventually need to know about maps. It aroused their interest and gave them certain basic techniques that served their present purposes. As the year went on, new problems with maps were solved as they arose.

Another class learned how to use authentic pictures effectively through a unit planned to help other children in the school develop interest in visiting the Zoo. The children in this class had little difficulty reading typical reference materials, but they wanted more information about the appearance of some of the animals, and they found it in a series of large color photographs. Here the information had to be secured by reading a rather meager caption and then examining the photograph for details. At first the children were baffled. Their reports tended to contain only summaries of what they found in the captions, and their questions indicated that much more information was needed. The teacher raised the problem of how effectively they were using the pictures. First it was pointed out that the pictures were authentic and could be trusted. Next the children were helped to take the accompanying captions apart, phrase by phrase, looking at the picture to see what each phrase meant. Then they tried to work out together a comprehensive statement taking in both what they read and what they saw. After this day of class discussion, each small group went back to work on its particular set of pictures. The teacher followed the lesson by helping one group at a time.

In a sense, all the methods that have been suggested in preceding sections for helping to develop better reading skills also contribute to the child's ability to handle the materials of the content fields. When special practice activities are needed for a problem occasioned by the style or format of particular materials, they will be most effective if they are built around the same type of material and make the same type of reading demands as those made by the classroom situation in which the original problem arose. The amount of material in any one exercise needs to be long enough to pose a genuine reading problem, but short enough to allow practice with several questions in one work period. Workbooks accompanying basal readers usually contain short selections of typical arithmetic, science, health, and social-science materials. Children's newspapers and magazines often have usable articles, sometimes accompanied by excellent test

questions. Short two- or three-paragraph selections can be mimeographed. Often a short selection from the regular textbook can be used with test questions mimeographed or written on the chalkboard. When the problem is one of learning to use particular aspects of format, such as section headings or summaries, a selection in the textbook itself is by far the most effective basis for practice. The type of question raised about these passages can vary with the particular skill that needs to be developed—choosing correct information; reading numbers accurately in an arithmetic problem or telling what one is asked to find; responding to precise terminology in science; distinguishing fact from fiction in a supplementary book. Completion, short answer, multiple-choice, true-false, and matching forms of test questions are all useful.

Activities for interpreting graphs, maps, and other visual aids can be developed by asking questions based on textbook materials. This is also an area where typical intermediate-grade workbook materials and tests of study skills suggest many types of activities. Materials for practice can also be mimeographed for children. Much additional helpful experience can be given through the illustrative materials produced by members of the group—maps on which they are at work, charts they are making of their reading progress, diagrams they are developing to illustrate a committee report.

The suggestions that follow include ways of helping children learn to work with different types of material, and methods of giving experience with visual aids and with special aspects of format. Special activities for vocabulary development were included in the preceding section on word study.

Ways of adjusting reading techniques to special purposes can be learned through: Answering a variety of questions on a set of arithmetic problems—which of the following did the problem ask you to find, will your answer be larger or smaller, which of the following processes will you use; answering questions calling for ability to read carefully the materials in a science text—putting the directions for an experiment in proper order, answering questions about diagrams or charts, preparing lists of special terms or checking special definitions; answering a series of questions on a social-studies assignment calling for details or for the general sequence of events; checking a series of statements in terms of whether they help or do not help with a problem; checking a series of statements in terms of whether they are proven true in the text; choosing which of a series of paragraphs bears on a specific problem.

Experience with visual aids can be secured through: Answering a series of simple questions calling for interpretation of symbols on a map

common to the group; sharing in the preparation of a class map of the city, the school ground, the state; writing answers to questions developed around a graph in common use; preparing a graph using data collected in a class project; comparing the values of several types of graphs used in familiar material; telling as much as one can about an event from a bulletin board picture, reading daily weather charts, preparing a class weather chart; preparing a graph of one's progress in reading speed, spelling test scores, or arithmetic marks.

Ability to use special aspects of format such as section and paragraph headings can be developed by: Seeing how rapidly one can locate a special topic or piece of information in a textbook or basal-reader story by using chapter or section headings; predicting whether a chapter will be of help on a problem by reading the chapter summary, testing the section headings in a story as possible bases for scenes in a play, discussing the style in which special examples are written in an arithmetic or a language textbook, identifying the devices used in a textbook to present rules, illustrations, or other special types of information

Improving Ability to Locate Information

Identify the skills involved in locating information. Problems of locating information were identified in Chapter XI as centering around the use of such aids as tables of contents and indexes, knowledge of such standard reference books as encyclopedias, atlases, and The World Almanac, and ability to use the library. Just how these problems will arise in particular classrooms depends upon the materials the children are actually using.

In the preceding chapter, three distinct types of abilities were identified as important in locating information. First, the child must become sufficiently well acquainted with different reference sources that he knows what kind of help to expect from them. Second, he must become increasingly familiar with the format of reference books —alphabetical order, guide words, ways of giving cross references, purposes of various parts of a bibliography, the plan of a library card file. Third, the child must also learn how to decide what topic to look for--how does one look up the industries in the New England states; under what topic would one look to find whether there are coal mines in Canada; where would one look to find out more about the vitamins in milk?

Just as all reading skills start very simply and gradually become more complex, so do reference skills. Many technical refinements may not be learned until college or graduate school. The teacher needs to help the children learn whatever techniques they require

to be efficient with the problem at hand. As more complicated aspects of the same skill are needed, new help can be given.

Make sure the child has related skills important for locating information. Inadequate reading skills can block the effective location of information in many ways. One major hindrance may be the child's general reading level. Although much progress has been made in the writing of easy reference books for children, their very nature precludes the provision of series graded in the same fashion as basal readers or basal textbooks in the content fields. Relatively more efficient use of typical reference books will be made by skillful readers. Another skill, difficult for many children, is that of defining exactly what questions they are trying to answer. This calls for all the teaching techniques related to helping children set up purposes, clarify problems, and learn how to make critical evaluations that have been discussed in preceding sections of this chapter and in Chapter XI. In some cases, it may also be important to build general experience background, and, in some, to help a group develop a more extensive stock of word meanings. The more the reader knows about an area, the more likely he is to be able to suggest key topics for reference purposes. Any technique that develops depth of insight into a problem is likely to help in developing skill in independent location of materials.

Provide practice in locating information in the light of specific needs. Many of the specific skills required to locate information lend themselves well to work-type exercises. Again, the most effective work-type activities are those that teach the child how to use the materials in his own classroom. Acquaintance with the general contributions of different types of reference books, particularly, is best built as the child tries to use the books to solve a problem. Often the actual encyclopedia, index, or table of contents that the children are using regularly is the best source of practice. Commercially-prepared workbook exercises and mimeographed sheets that reproduce sample items from indexes or tables of contents are also helpful. Librarians can sometimes supply models of catalog cards suitable for group study.

Special questions based on these practice materials can be developed in a variety of completion and short-answer forms. As nearly as possible they need to be representative of the sort of question the child will have to answer as he uses reference materials from day to day. Since it is important for the child to think about why he chose the book or topic he did, it is particularly helpful to plan practice

sessions so that there is time to discuss procedures used, to appraise bases for choices, and to decide where one would turn next if one does not find all the information one needs.

Identifying key words is needed for: Choosing from three possible answers the word most likely to be helpful in looking up the answer to a question; naming the topics under which the answer to a series of questions would be likely to appear; checking a given problem in an index and reporting the key words under which it is listed, underlining, for a series of proper names, the part that would be the key word—United States, John Paul Jones, British Empire, Santa Fe Railroad.

Using an index is called for in: Locating the page on which one would find a list of topics and sub-topics phrased in the same way they are in the index, a list phrased differently from the way they appear in the index; placing a list of topics from an index in alphabetical order; telling how many pages in the book contain references to a topic area, going from the index of one's text to the pages indicated to decide which reference actually provides the needed help; telling which topic in an index would be most appropriate for locating a specific piece of information.

Using a table of contents can be learned through: Seeing how quickly one can find a special story in the basal reader; checking the tables of contents of several books to list the chapters available as references for a given topic; estimating from a table of contents how many pages are likely to be devoted to a given topic; examining a new book and predicting its probable nature from the table of contents, taking a new book and listing all the things one can find out about it from a table of contents.

Ability to choose among standard reference materials is developed through: Indicating which of a list of texts will answer a series of questions; finding an article in a classroom encyclopedia and answering simple questions based on it; comparing several classroom reference texts and listing the special uses of each; starting with a given topic in an encyclopedia and following the cross-reference suggestions; providing a bibliography of available materials for one's committee to use, studying and reporting on the parts of the daily paper as background for publishing a class paper.

Skill in using a library can be developed through: Answering completion or multiple-choice questions about a sample library call card; choosing which of two or three suggested topics would be most helpful in locating information to answer a list of questions; keeping a simple bibliography of the references used during a unit activity; seeing how many titles one can find by one's favorite author, or about one's favorite topic; locating classroom materials in a classroom card file or school materials file, helping to set up a simple file of classroom materials, serving as librarian for the class library.

Developing Skills in Outlining, Summarizing, and Note-taking

Identify the skills involved in making written records of what is read. Outlining, summarizing, and note-taking go on in relation to a specific problem. In providing special practice it is important to give attention to the immediate task being faced by the reader. This is particularly true of note-taking where the usefulness of the notes depends largely on their bearing on the problem at hand. Outlines and summaries, too, while they may in some cases give the sense of the total selection, more often are developed to meet a special need. It is almost impossible to supply the reader with a standard formula that will produce effective notes, summaries, or outlines for all situations.

Note-taking, outlining, and summarizing all require the reader to put what he has read into his own words. This is often a difficult task. Fourth-graders will do well if they are able to give in logical order the four or five main points of an outline. Their summaries are likely to be simple, and their notes are likely to be a series of statements of fact centered around one or two very definite problems. More mature readers should be able to identify the sub-points in an outline. Their summaries should show greater ability to distinguish between important points and unnecessary details. They should be able to make a series of notes bearing more directly on the sub-points of a complex problem. Furthermore, they should begin to show more versatility in attack—better ability to judge when full notes are needed and when a brief record is sufficient, when many details should be included in a summary and when only main points are needed, and how complete an outline should be.

Make sure the child has related skills important for making written records of what is read. When a child seems to be having unusual difficulty making an outline or summary or taking adequate notes, several areas will bear further investigation. As indicated in Chapter XI, a first check may well be upon the child's conception of what he is looking for. Vague purposes usually result in vague reporting. A second check should be on the difficulty of the material. Even a competent reader is likely to come to unfounded conclusions, or to resort to copying or to paraphrasing the words of the book, if its terminology or the strangeness of its concepts makes him uncertain as to what it actually means. Lack of comprehension is often betrayed by copying meaningless sentence fragments, or by misquotations, transpositions, or omissions that destroy the meaning. It is important, also,

to look at the child's general reading skills. Outlining and summarizing, particularly, call for ability to follow the general gist of a paragraph or a longer passage and to see details in their proper relationship. Note-taking adds the task of selecting details appropriate for the problem at hand. The job of reporting what has been read in written form, whether it be an outline, a summary, or a set of notes, is a difficult one. Foundation skills can be laid in the elementary grades, but proficiency is not likely to be developed before high school or college.

Provide practice that calls for written expression. Because the problems of note-taking, outlining, and summarizing are closely related to the child's on-going reading experiences, much of the help he receives should come through the type of day-by-day guidance discussed in Chapter XI. Sometimes a special problem can be made the center of several days of intensive work. In one fifth grade with exceptionally strong reading skill, the teacher developed note-taking skills through a study of pioneer life. This class eventually used every resource book in the room and brought many items from home. The first notes were encyclopedic. This became apparent during the first day's work as the teacher checked the progress of each group. The note-taking problem was raised with the entire class at the beginning of the next work period. Under the teacher's guidance the children evaluated some of their notes in the light of their original plans. It was agreed that too little attention was being paid to the purpose for which they read. One child pointed out that he didn't know exactly what his committee was looking for. Someone suggested that committees should have raised more definite questions before they began to read. Some groups did have lists of questions, but they were in the secretaries' notebooks and were not being used. As a result of the discussion, each group drew up a specific list of *Things to Look For*. The teacher helped to appraise each list as she visited the groups in turn. After the lists were checked, they were printed on large sheets of paper and pasted on cardboard so that they could be propped up and studied as the groups worked. One more evaluation period was devoted to reports on whether the lists were helping and to a discussion of other note-taking problems that were still causing trouble for the class as a whole. From this point on, the teacher gave individual help as needed.

Special practice activities should be planned so that the child is helped to think about the purposes his notes or outlines are going to

serve. In most cases, the child should have the experience of writing his answers, since one of the skills he needs to learn is that of putting what he has read into his own words. Any short, clearly written story or piece of informational material can serve as a basis for practice. Single paragraphs can sometimes be used for purposes of summarizing but, since the reader is trying to learn how to report on several points in relationship, a short article with several paragraphs is often more useful. Many of the shorter basal-reader selections can be used effectively. Children will have a better opportunity to concentrate on the desired note-taking or outlining skills if they are working with relatively easy material so that lack of related reading skills does not get in the way. Reasonably high interest value in the materials being used also helps.

The difficulty of the note-taking or summarizing task can be varied by the phrasing of the assignment. Listing the four main points in a story is simpler than listing sub-points under each. Filling in one missing sub-point is easier than filling in all of them. Telling in one sentence the most important fact in a paragraph is easier than trying to include sub-points in a three- or four-sentence summary. Often it is helpful to work through several activities with the children as a group so that they can discuss the basis for the points they have chosen and the teacher can help to develop insights into what makes for an effective outline, summary, or set of notes. The following suggest possible types of activities to use for practice.

Skill in outlining is needed for: Filling in two or three points missing in a four- or five-point outline, filling in one or more sub-points in a partially finished outline; filling in completely an outline where only the framework of numbered points is given as a guide; helping group a series of questions, suggested by the class for the development of a unit, into three or four main topics; finding topic sentences in a series of easy paragraphs, writing an outline of a clear article by giving the topic sentence of each paragraph; matching a series of topic sentences with the correct paragraphs, re-arranging a series of topic sentences into the original organization of the story; reading a basal reader story and dividing it into acts and scenes for a play.

Ability to make a summary is called for in: Writing a brief review of a recreational book; taking part in a group discussion of what points to include in a class report, preparing a summary of a basal-reader story by writing one clear sentence to give the gist of each paragraph; giving the main idea of a passage by looking for the topic sentence in each paragraph; re-arranging a set of sentences so that they summarize the steps in a process or a sequence of events in the correct order.

PART V

ASSURING THE PROGRESS OF INDIVIDUALS—APPRAISAL AND REMEDIAL HELP

CHAPTER XIII

APPRAISING, RECORDING, AND REPORTING PROGRESS

THE SUCCESS of the reading program depends upon the insight and good judgment of the classroom teacher. Hers is the responsibility for developing new skills in the order and at the rate most appropriate for the maximum growth of the children in her particular class. This places upon her the major share of the burden of appraising progress and of deciding upon next steps. How can she be sure that her decisions are sound?

Appraisal of children's progress in learning to read has two interrelated aspects. First, and perhaps most important, it provides the insights that guide the planning of day-by-day reading experiences. Second, back of these immediate decisions are more general considerations regarding the degree to which the children in a particular group are making satisfactory progress toward the eventual mastery of adult reading skills. This little group of first-graders is still struggling with a preprimer. Is this to be expected or should more intensive practice be provided? Several children in this second grade cannot name the letters of the alphabet in order. Should they be given more practice now or should the teaching of this skill be left until later? What about the reading interests of the children in this fifth grade? Should they be encouraged to read more library books, even if it means spending less time with basal-reader series? Answers to questions such as these call both for insight into the immediate problems faced by children at their present levels of ability and for understanding of the goals toward which the total reading program is directed.

Since appraisal has been regarded in this volume as a necessary first step in planning every reading experience for children, the

preceding chapters contain many examples of the appraisal process in action. This chapter summarizes suggestions related to four main problem areas. First, what standards can the teacher use to corroborate her judgments regarding children's progress? Second, what techniques can she use to appraise and to record day-by-day evidence of progress and problems? Third, how can standardized tests be used most effectively in the appraisal process? Fourth, how can children's progress be interpreted to parents?

School faculties are also professionally interested in appraising the effectiveness of their total reading programs. Guides for such appraisals can be found in Chapter II, where general principles underlying the total reading program are proposed, and at the end of each of the subsequent chapters in the questions suggested for appraising the effectiveness of the aspect of the program under discussion. These guides may be helpful to teachers desirous of taking a look at the reading program for the school as a whole.

ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR APPRAISAL PURPOSES

An appraisal is a value judgment. This implies standards. Statements of goals such as those given in preceding chapters suggest general objectives, but each child is likely to be at a different point in his progress toward these objectives. What further guides may the teacher use as she tries to determine the needs of her particular class? How can she be sure that the children are making progress commensurate with their abilities? On what can she base her decisions as to when to push and when to move slowly, when to increase the difficulty of the job to be done and when to simplify it?

A number of guides can be suggested for the appraisal process. Some relate to the objectives of the reading program, some to accumulated knowledge regarding child growth and development, some to the child's performance in the classroom, and some to his ability to handle such standardized reading materials as reading tests or basal-reader series.

Does the child's progress follow a pattern typical of the normal sequence of development of reading skill? Thorough understanding of the way in which reading skill develops under modern teaching methods is essential in appraising progress. This means not only knowing the general sequence in which children can be expected to develop increased skill but also having insight into the interrelationships among specific techniques. The discussions of chang-

ing goals from the prereading program to the intermediate grades and the analyses of interrelationships among specific techniques given in earlier chapters are included as aids to this understanding.

In the light of her understanding of the process of learning to read, a teacher can make an appraisal of the general status of a child or of a group—they are typical second-graders; they work more like primary children although they are in fourth grade; they are exceptionally able readers for sixth-graders. This understanding also helps in appraising specific techniques. These children are first-graders; their knowledge of sounds can be expected to be limited. This third-grade group relies too heavily on the configurations of words; by now they should be more independent in word analysis. This youngster is still polishing his word analysis techniques; he should not be urged to read more rapidly. There is no reason for this sixth-grader to read so slowly; he needs help to overcome his habit of word-by-word reading. Teachers should also seek other more objective evidence regarding the progress of their classes, but they should not distrust their own professional judgments.

The teacher's professional insight plays an important part in the day by day appraisals that govern her decisions regarding next steps. As she works with the children she notes a situation in which skills are inadequate, a tendency to turn to her for help on a problem where independence could be expected, an area in which the group seems to be making unusual progress. These types of observations guide her discussions in reading groups, her choice of work-type or follow-up activities, her work with individuals.

Is the child's pattern of growth typical of that which might be expected of children of his general level of maturity and ability? The statement that an eight-year-old's reading skills are typical of those of a third grader is not an evaluation of his progress. Whether his achievement is to be appraised as exceptional or as limited depends on many factors.

Chronological age or its corresponding school grade is not an adequate standard against which to appraise achievement. Children who have lived for the same number of months have inherited different capacities to learn. They mature at different rates, grow up in homes that provide different types of experience background, suffer from different childhood illnesses, and struggle with different physical handicaps and emotional tensions. They cannot be expected to meet a single standard in their school achievement.

Various alternatives to chronological age have been proposed as bases for evaluating progress in reading. For remedial cases, Gates [1] suggests using a child's mental age based on his performance on the *Revised Stanford-Binet Scale*. This is an individual test that must be given by a qualified examiner. It has the advantage of requiring a minimum amount of reading from the child and yet of posing for him questions that have proven valuable in predicting school achievement. However, school systems do not always have the personnel trained to give this test, and rarely is there sufficient psychological service to give it to children other than those who have remedial problems or who, for some other reason, are the subjects of intensive study.

Group intelligence tests also yield mental ages. As indicators of a child's potential ability, these scores have to be used with caution This is particularly true when the child is a poor reader and the test score is based on items that demand reading skill. In the intermediate and high school grades, especially, poor readers may be classified as dull children because of their low achievement on verbal intelligence tests. Some group intelligence tests are built around items that do not demand reading skill, and some provide separate subtest scores for items involving language and for those that measure such factors as number and spatial relationships. These non-language scores may be of help in estimating the potential ability of a poor reader, although there is evidence to suggest that there is not always a high correlation between a child's language ability and his reasoning ability in situations in which language is not of primary importance.[2]

Olson [3] reports considerable thought-provoking evidence regarding the relation of children's over-all patterns of maturation to their achievement in school subjects. He suggests the child's organismic age—an average of separate age calculations for such factors as intellectual development, height, weight, dentition, grip, and skeletal growth—as a basis for evaluating his achievement. Although such extensive information about children's growth patterns is not always available, the suggestion that general maturity be considered in appraising children's school achievement is a helpful one.

[1] Arthur I Gates *The Improvement of Reading*, p 583 Third Edition New York The Macmillan Company, 1947.

[2] L. L. Thurstone and Thelma Gwinn Thurstone, *Factorial Studies of Intelligence* Chicago The University of Chicago Press, 1941.

[3] Willard C. Olson, *Child Development*, pp. 118–158. Boston D. C. Heath and Company, 1949.

There are also available reading achievement and capacity tests for the late primary and intermediate grades.[4] They measure word meaning and paragraph meaning both in the typical format of a reading test and in an oral version where the children listen as the examiner reads to them, and then mark pictures to indicate the correct answers. For children whose normal language development has not been retarded, scores on these tests may be helpful in revealing discrepancies between ability to read and ability to understand through listening to materials of the same difficulty level.

Even without test scores, an experienced teacher can often make a reasonable estimate of a child's potential ability. Observations of the way in which he operates in problem-solving situations are particularly helpful. In group discussions does he see relationships quickly and draw sound conclusions? Is his speaking vocabulary rich or impoverished? How well does he handle arithmetic problems? Does his curiosity about the world around him center on aspects that are simpler or more complex than those that interest most children of his age? Care needs to be taken, however, to avoid a "halo effect" resulting from a specific aspect of a child's behavior. Impoverished experience background does not mean that a child is incapable of learning. Sometimes the common-sense comments of an over-age child give the impression of greater intellectual ability than he actually has. Children who are ill or emotionally disturbed may not display their full potential ability. Even when there are intelligence test scores to support the teacher's judgment, it is not safe to classify a child too quickly. Often it is a helpful safeguard to match opinions with other teachers who also work with the child, or with the principal or a supervisor who are not so directly involved in the day-by-day situation.

Maturity and potential learning ability are not the only factors to consider in appraising a child's progress in learning to read. His growth needs in areas other than reading also have to be taken into account. From kindergarten on, there will be children whose general language ability is limited, and who need unusually broad experiences in writing and speaking as well as in reading. There will be some for whom the school must supply the breadth of experience often provided by the home. Others may need special experiences to develop health habits normally taught at home. There will be children who need help in learning to get along with their peers

[4] Donald D. Durrell and Helen B. Sullivan, *Durrell-Sullivan Reading Capacity and Achievement Tests*. Yonkers-on-Hudson: The World Book Company, 1937, 1941.

and children who seek in the school the affection that others find at home. There are only a limited number of minutes in the school day, and they must be expended to assure the greatest possible total development for each child.

Progress in reading, then, needs to be appraised with the maturity, the range of potential abilities, and the total growth needs of a class in mind. Are the majority of these fourth-graders more nearly like typical third-graders in maturity and in general intellectual ability? Then the fact that they are just now beginning to approach fourth-grade reading skill is not a matter of concern. Are they a very able group, many of whom operate like typical fifth-graders? Then low fourth-grade reading ability suggests that there has not been adequate stimulation and guidance in learning to read. The assumption that children are doing satisfactory work because they have the skills typical of the average child in the grades to which their chronological ages have assigned them is unsound. It sets for the child of limited ability a standard that is likely to lead to frustration and defeat and, perhaps more serious, it asks of the gifted child only a minimum use of his full potentialities.

The teacher's insights into a child's potential ability and his related growth needs also guide day by-day decisions regarding the type of help he should be given in learning to read. There will need to be special adjustments of materials and methods if the slow learners in the room are to make maximum progress in terms of their abilities. Equally, every effort will need to be made to provide experiences that will challenge the full powers of children of high potential ability.

It is particularly important to look at a child's potential ability when making decisions regarding his need for remedial teaching. All the youngsters whose work is below that which would be considered average for their grade are not candidates for remedial programs. The child who is most likely to profit from intensive remedial help is the one whose potential ability is distinctly above his actual performance. Such help is not likely to bring about marked gains in the case of the child whose achievement is already close to the expectancies suggested by his own growth patterns and potentialities.

Is there reasonably steady growth in ability to handle new reading problems? Under a reading program that is well adjusted to children's capacities there should be reasonably steady growth. This is another way in which the progress of a group may be evaluated.

The concept of reasonably steady growth needs interpretation. All reading skills will not necessarily improve at the same rate or at the same time. Some depend upon the development of others. Furthermore, there will be plateaus in learning when a child seemingly consolidates and learns to use efficiently his present skills. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to ask whether a child is gradually becoming able to handle more difficult reading problems. Six weeks ago Joe needed help with a primer; today he is reading for recreation a book of about the same difficulty. Three weeks ago Kate was baffled by three-syllable words; last week she was able to break several words into syllables, but was not too sure in blending them; today she worked out several words without help. At the beginning of the year Norma's tendency was to copy notes directly from the science book; today she had clear statements in her own words. These are the types of evidence from day to day that show that children are gaining increased reading skill.

Reasonably steady growth also means that more mature ways of working are developing, not that a child is getting better and better at using laborious techniques. It is not progress in the primary grades to become so skillful in remembering the configuration of new words that word-analysis techniques are seldom employed. Neither is it progress to grow so painstaking in reading for details that techniques of skimming are rarely used, or to become so adept at reading aloud that silent reading speed is affected.

Another evidence of progress is a child's insight into his reading skills. With increased maturity should come increased understanding of effective reading techniques and increased ability to identify difficulties and needs for special practice. "If you don't know a word, it helps if you think how it starts and whether it fits in." "You save time if you look to find just what you want before you start to read." "I'm trying to slow down when I read out loud. People couldn't tell what I was saying." Insights such as these indicate that children are learning how to solve their own reading problems, and becoming sensitive to the skills that make for efficient reading.

The teacher's judgment regarding the types of experience needed to assure progress helps to determine the kind of challenge she places before a group. Sometimes it will seem important to consolidate present gains by providing ample experience with reading problems of the same complexity as those with which children are now working. Sometimes it will be appropriate to simplify one aspect of a read-

ing activity in order to achieve gains in another aspect—as when a teacher provides materials that pose few technical problems for the first note-taking efforts of a group. At other times the group will seem ready for a more challenging activity, for more difficult materials, or for a new way of working.

Does the child make active use of his reading skill in solving classroom problems? Perhaps nothing provides a surer guarantee that children will make progress commensurate with their abilities than a classroom in which there are ample materials of varied difficulty levels and many opportunities to use reading to solve genuine problems. In such a setting the range of reading opportunities extends far beyond the capacities of the most able child, and there is virtually no limit to the standards he may set for himself.

One basis for appraising children's growth in reading, then, is the degree to which they are disposed to use their skill. Do they enjoy their activities in reading groups? Do they take pleasure in testing out new skills—in finding new words on the bulletin board; in making independent analyses of new words; in finding articles in the encyclopedia without help; in locating at home the information needed for a special project? Do they ask permission to read favorite stories to their friends, or to take books home? Such active interest is evidence that the program is vital and challenging even to the less skilled readers. It means, too, that the children with greater skill are finding opportunities to tackle problems that call for the full use of their abilities.

Increasingly, as children engage in wide independent reading, the problems they face help to determine their next reading activities. Playing a part in the choice of activities, also, is the teacher's professional judgment regarding the kind of guidance that will result in progress toward the eventual mastery of adult reading skills. As she watches children in reading situations throughout the day, she notes strengths and weaknesses—work with these spelling words indicates phonograms that need to be stressed; this group is going to need more practice with the vocabulary in the last experience record; this youngster should be more efficient in using an index; the notes taken by the members of this group indicate weakness in reading for precise details. These problems then become centers for instruction—in reading groups; in special practice groups; in a class activity as part of a social-studies unit; as part of a spelling lesson;

in work-type activities planned for individuals or groups; in special conferences with the teacher.

What is the nature of the child's performance on standardized reading tests? In many school systems children's scores on standardized reading tests are used as one basis for appraisal. Occasionally they outweigh other evidences that children have made progress. Their value lies in the fact that they provide, through their norms, evidence regarding the typical performance of large numbers of children who have worked under standardized conditions with the materials which comprise the test. Test scores are, therefore, useful objective measures against which the teacher can place her more subjective judgments regarding the progress of her class.

Because standardized tests are in common use, a later section in this chapter is devoted to problems of selecting, administering and interpreting them. It is sufficient to say, at this point, that a grade score of 4.0 on a reading test represents a statement of what the average child at the beginning of fourth grade might be expected to accomplish. It is not a minimum score below which no beginning fourth-grader should be expected to fall, nor is it a maximum which would represent satisfactory work for a child who is exceptionally able. The grade score of any particular youngster needs to be appraised with the factors mentioned previously in mind—his maturity, his mental age, his other growth needs. For a fourth grader with approximately third-grade intellectual ability a grade score of 4.0 on a reading test would be very good indeed. For a fourth-grader with intellectual ability of approximately fifth-grade level, this same score represents limited achievement in reading. In looking at class averages, teachers need to keep these same factors in mind.

Standardized reading tests fail to serve their full purpose unless they, too, help to guide daily classroom activities. Methods of studying test performances for this purpose are also included in the section on tests later in this chapter.

How well does the child handle the basal-reader series constructed for his grade level? Perhaps no measure of reading achievement is used as frequently as that which expresses a child's ability in terms of the basal-reader level at which he is working. "He is still reading primers." "These are the poorest readers in this fifth grade. They are still reading third-grade books." "Some of these fourth-graders can handle sixth-grade readers without any trouble." Such statements

are frequently heard and, because the difficulty levels of basal readers do not differ greatly from series to series, they give a reasonably clear picture of a child's reading ability.

The grade level of the basal reader that a child can handle with ease tells no more about whether his achievement is to be appraised as superior or limited than does a grade score from a standardized reading test or a teacher's judgment regarding the general level at which he is working. This measurement of a child's achievement, too, has to be appraised in terms of his potential learning ability. Authors of basal texts have designated them for the grade level at which they are most likely to be useful for the average child. There is no intent to propose these materials as standards which all children in a given grade must attain or to use them to hold an able reader to a level of achievement that is below his capacity. When related factors have been taken into account, the grade level of the basal reader which a child can handle with relative ease is another useful objective check on a teacher's professional judgment regarding his present status and the types of experiences that will be most effective in contributing to his growth.

APPRAISING AND RECORDING EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS FROM DAY TO DAY

It is not easy to provide the necessary guidance for the varied activities of a large group of children and still to be sure that the needs of each child are being met, not only in reading but in all the other areas of experience that make up his school curriculum. The preceding chapters contain many examples of techniques that are helpful in studying the problems and progress of a class. These may be grouped, for summary purposes, in three areas. First, there are problems of finding ways of studying children as regular classroom activities proceed. Second, there are problems of devising a system of record-keeping which provides the needed objective evidence about a child but which is not so cumbersome and time-consuming as to be virtually impossible to maintain in a typical classroom. Third, there are problems of helping children share in the appraisal and the recording process. A variety of possibilities is explored within each section. No one teacher will necessarily use them all, nor will she need all the evidence suggested in order to appraise adequately the progress of an individual child.

Studying Classroom Activities for Clues to Problems and Progress

Identify the problems arising in functional reading situations throughout the day. It is not as difficult as it may seem to appraise children's reading skills as they go about their daily classroom activities. In fact, any teacher, even a beginner, gives a very clear picture of the abilities of her group as she talks about her work and her problems to her colleagues, her principal, or her supervisor. One of the most helpful techniques described in preceding chapters is that of providing opportunities for children to work independently. Even in a first grade this gives the teacher a certain amount of time to talk with individual children or to observe the ways in which various group members approach a new reading problem. With more mature children the teacher may have time to talk to small groups having special difficulty; to quiz a youngster about the way he worked out the pronunciation of a word or to ask him how he went about finding it in the dictionary; to move from group to group observing children's reference techniques. These short contacts with individuals and small groups highlight strengths and weaknesses in a way that is not possible when thirty or more youngsters are taught as a total group.

Another device that is particularly fruitful in identifying the needs of older children is that of talking over problems of how to read before a task requiring extensive reading is begun. This not only prevents certain problems from occurring, but it also helps the teacher to identify efficient procedures or confusions and inadequate approaches as children discuss how they will go about the job.

The times when special help in reading is planned as part of a unit of work offer opportunities to take a look at specific skills. Some first-graders work on the new words learned on an excursion; which are the ones that are the hardest for them to remember? A third-grade group takes a period to learn more about locating the information for a science project; what techniques do they lack? Everyone in a fifth grade shares in a discussion of how to locate topics in an encyclopedia; what confusions exist?

It is helpful, also, to be sensitive to regular classroom activities that are most likely to yield evidence regarding specific skills. Lists of such situations were given in Chapters VIII and XI. Spelling activities, for example, often reveal word-study problems. Times

when children are using class plans, following the directions for a special project, or following the written rules of a new game provide opportunities to observe differences in ability to follow directions. Recreational-reading periods can be used to study a child's reading interests, the grade level of the book he chooses to read independently, and his ability to report on the gist of a story. It is not necessary to try to appraise growth in all reading skills at once. More effective observations will be made by studying the range of abilities in the skill that is focal at the moment.

Study children's responses in reading groups. Reading groups provide opportunities to study children's strengths and weaknesses very directly. Here, too, the policy of encouraging children to read independently is helpful in the appraisal process. As a group reads a story silently it is possible to observe differences in reading rate, to spot habits such as pointing or vocalizing, to note tendencies merely to leaf through the story. Often, during this silent-reading period, the teacher has time to explore a little the word-analysis approaches of children who ask for help or to check briefly on the comprehension of those who finish first.

In the discussion that follows the reading of a story it is possible to ask questions that reveal ability to follow the general thread of a story, to note important details, or to predict what will happen next. Opportunities to read parts of a story aloud can be used to appraise oral-reading skills. Follow-up activities can be used to explore strengths or weaknesses in such areas as recognizing new words, outlining the story for dramatization or illustration purposes, or listing important details. If these activities are planned originally with definite reading skills in mind, the process of appraising the abilities of the group is simplified.

When children are working to improve a specific skill in a reading-group situation, it is easier still to note progress and problems. These practice sessions are often planned around work-type activities. When this is the case the child's paper provides further evidence of his skill or the lack of it.

A certain number of useful records can be made in reading-group situations. Lists can be kept of the words for which help was requested. Sometimes the group members engaged in special practice will keep records of their progress through check lists, records of questions missed, or graphs of progress. Anecdotal records of reading habits may be made as children work silently. Such systematic col-

lection of significant bits of evidence can result in a helpful accumulation of information.

Analyze work-type activities. Other evidence of children's present status in reading can be secured by studying their work-type activities. Some of this analysis goes on as teacher and children talk over the particular activity. "Why do you disagree with Jerry's answer?" "Can you see why you made your mistake?" "Why did you have trouble with that word?" Such discussions help the teacher to see where some of the difficulties lie, and they also help the group members to grow in their understanding of reading skills.

When more information seems to be needed, work-type activities may be collected from time to time and made the subject of more intensive analysis. What pattern of errors seems to emerge? Is there a group problem revealed or are the difficulties mainly those of individuals? Does lack of related skills seem to be complicating the task at hand? Where do these related problems seem to lie? If a permanent record is desired, diagnostic notes from such analyses may be added to the mimeographed exercise or the workbook page and the material dropped in the child's cumulative record folder.

Set up informal test situations. When further evidence of children's strengths and weaknesses is needed, it is possible to set up informal test situations. Work-type activities serve this purpose, insofar as they focus upon a particular reading skill. The suggestions in Chapters VII, IX, and XII of ways of setting up work-type exercises in objective-test form will provide the patterns for informal tests of various silent-reading skills. Workbook pages can serve the same purpose. Children may complete these exercises independently so that the picture of each child's work is accurate. Later they may be used for teaching purposes.

It is also possible to plan group activities so that they yield informal test evidence. Review activities with words in the primary grades can be planned so that children's special problems are revealed. A problem such as "Let's see how long it will take you to find . . . ' sets up a situation requiring speed of reading and skill in locating details. Asking children to tell how they would change the ending of a story will reveal differences in ability to predict outcomes. A dictionary game in which children race to find the meaning of a given word can give evidence of skill with alphabetical order and guide words.

Oral reading was mentioned in preceding chapters as a source of

diagnostic evidence. A reasonably well-graded informal test can be set up by selecting paragraphs from near the beginning and the end of basal readers covering three or four grade levels. With an oral-reading test planned in this way the level at which a child begins to have trouble with unfamiliar words gives a reasonable indication of the difficulty of the material with which he should be working. It is possible to get evidence of a child's comprehension of a passage by asking him about it after he has finished reading and also by noting the types of errors he makes. If he substitutes words that make sense, repeats in order to correct errors, and reads in recognizable phrase and sentence units, he is sensitive to the meaning of what he is reading. If his errors destroy the meaning of the passage, it is less likely that he is able to think about what he is reading. Such evidence needs to be checked against a child's silent-reading performance, however, as the task of reading aloud is, in itself, sometimes difficult enough to cause misreadings that would not occur in a silent-reading situation. It is important to remember, also, that the more difficult the material becomes the less meaning the passage is likely to have for a child. Oral reading of extremely hard material is perhaps of most value in revealing a child's approach to unfamiliar words.

Additional helpful insights into a child's word-study skills can be secured by asking him to read aloud a list of words that increase gradually in difficulty. Often it is revealing to ask him to tell what he is doing. Some children can describe quite accurately the methods they use. "First I look for all the little words I can find. Then I try to put them together." "It's like spelling. If I say the letters to myself I sometimes remember what it is." "It begins like *stay* and the last part says *shun*. It's easy when you can find parts you know." "I sort of squint at it. Sometimes you see it better that way." When their word-study habits are analyzed, some children who seemingly are good readers will be discovered to have excellent memories for the configurations of words but very little skill in word analysis. Others will be relying on routine use of a single technique—small words, word families, beginning letters. These insights into a child's methods of work can be helpful in planning his next word-analysis experiences and sometimes in explaining his difficulties in comprehension.

Check lists can be of value in analyzing oral-reading skills. These often serve as useful teaching aids if teacher and children develop them together. Extensive lists have been provided in the pupil's record booklets that are part of the diagnostic test batteries prepared

by Durrell [5] and by Gates.[6] However, these lists are very detailed and a selected number of crucial items are likely to be more appropriate for typical classroom use. As suggested in Chapter XII, check-list items used to appraise a child's ability to handle the technical aspects of the material he reads will center around the types of errors he makes, the words he misses, the points at which he repeats, and his ability to sense phrasing and to respond to punctuation marks. Items to appraise a child's skill in reading before an audience will put relatively more emphasis on enunciation, ability to convey a desired mood, effective rate for the listening audience, and poise. Check lists also may be useful in recording a child's skills in word analysis—his general approach; the sounds he knows; the parts of words he responds to most readily; his ability to break words into syllables. Some teachers have found ways of using such check lists as a regular part of group practice sessions. Eventually the completed records may be added to the child's cumulative folder.

Keeping Adequate Records

Add representative samples of work systematically to the child's cumulative record folder. Many plans for reading experiences from day to day are made on the basis of observations that are not recorded. However, teachers also face the problem of interpreting a child's progress to his parents and of supplying to the teacher to whom he is promoted a reasonably clear record of his growth and his present status. It is important, then, to make a systematic effort to collect objective evidence of a child's achievement.

In many school systems a cumulative record is kept for each child. This record is begun when he first enters school. Often the record form is printed on a folder in which a variety of evidences of the child's growth can be filed. Usually there is space on the folder itself to record such data as birth date, names and address of parents, siblings, medical record, scores on standardized tests, and records of transfers from school to school. On this record form each teacher notes her appraisals of the child's work for the year. Sometimes this is in the form of letter grades, sometimes in descriptive statements. A busy teacher needs simple ways of collecting the evidence that substantiates these appraisals.

[5] Donald D. Durrell, *Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty*. Yonkers-on-Hudson: The World Book Company, 1937.

[6] Arthur I. Gates, *Gates Reading Diagnostic Tests*. Revised Edition. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1945.

A certain amount of evidence can be collected by dating and filing samples of the child's work from time to time. Some teachers file a sheet listing the books the child has read under guidance during the year. A number of other appropriate materials have already been suggested. Work-type activities or workbook pages can be chosen so that the child's growth over the months can be seen. Check lists of oral-reading skills can be filed. It is often helpful to keep in the child's record for at least a year the actual test booklets of any standardized tests he has taken. For older children it may be of value to file typical samples of the types of notes they take or the summary reports they write. If such materials are dropped into the file at reasonably regular intervals, the result can be a well-rounded picture of a child's progress and an excellent collection of concrete material to use in parent conferences.

Eventually cumulative folders can become cluttered with a child's work. It can be helpful to go over the material at intervals and to summarize the evidence on a permanent record sheet. These summary statements need to contain facts as well as judgments. "Sue is becoming much more interested in recreational reading." is not as informative as "Last month Sue read Her selection of library books today includes" If conferences with parents are foreseen, representative examples out of the total collection of the child's work may be important to leave in the file.

Save records of group activities. Because pupil-teacher planning is an integral part of the development of activities in the modern classroom, the bulletin boards are likely to contain many records that can provide a helpful picture of children's reading activities. Such records do not have to be transcribed to a child's cumulative folder to be useful. They may be dated and kept in a single file until special information is needed. If the collection becomes too unwieldy it, too, may be analyzed at intervals and the most important information summarized for the folders of individual children.

Records pertaining to unit activities in the content fields can give a picture of the breadth of children's informational reading. In the primary grades some of these records will be experience charts. Affixing the names of the children who shared in composing particular charts provides information regarding special contributions to the unit. Lists of committees, bibliographies, class notebooks containing group reports, help to record the parts older children have played in the development of a unit. At both levels, lists of un-

familiar words will help to show the type of vocabulary building that was needed.

There may also be group records of reading projects. Among these may be summaries of class discussions of reading problems—how to be a good audience, how to read aloud, what makes a good book report, what steps to take to find new materials. Then, too, there are likely to be lists signed by people who have given book reports, lists of volunteers for oral-reading story parties, and records of plans for reading units. All these can help to fill in the picture of the breadth of the total program and of the participation of individual children.

Many ways of developing class records of recreational reading have been suggested in earlier chapters. These can be studied to determine the quantity and the quality of the child's independent reading. Some of these records may be planned in such a way that the child classifies his book as he records it. When this has been done he, his teacher, and his parents can see at a glance where his reading interests lie.

Collect occasional anecdotal records. From the prereading level on, anecdotal records can be a helpful addition to other information collected about a child. These are the teacher's special observations of a child's attitudes, behavior, and ways of working. The fact that Janice read three books this month whereas last month she read only one may not be so revealing as the teacher's report that Janice was so entranced with her latest book that she had to be pried away from it to complete other work. Bennie's low score on a word-recognition test may conceal the fact that he has recently been trying out word analysis techniques on all the new words he meets, even though his methods are not always accurate. Sandra's love of poetry and the fact that she reads it well may not appear in the files of her written work. These pieces of evidence are important to the total picture of the child's reading skill.

As suggested in the earlier discussion of the use of anecdotal records in appraising reading readiness, it is not necessary to try to jot down something every day about every child in order to collect helpful anecdotes. What needs to be recorded is the significant evidence of progress or the anecdote that illustrates a typical problem. In the earlier discussion it was also suggested that the collecting of anecdotal records can be facilitated by identifying points in a typical day's program when specific reading needs are likely to be most clearly apparent—a library period studied for evidence of reading

interests; a group activity of composing an experience record studied for evidences of differences in oral expression; an informational-reading period studied for evidence of ability to work independently. It is virtually impossible in a typical classroom setting to write extensive anecdotal records about all children, but it is possible to collect a limited number of them to supplement the other evidence accumulating about a child when the full story can not seem to be told without them.

Helping Children Share in the Appraisal Process

Provide a classroom setting where children enjoy the challenge of a hard job. Children need to be given a share in appraising their progress. This is important if they are to grow in their insight into their own needs and in their ability to give direction to their own practice activities. The classroom atmosphere that encourages children to look at their weaknesses as well as their strengths is one in which credit is given to those who have insights into their own difficulties, and one in which it is obviously more important to be tackling a new skill and improving, even though progress is slow, than it is to turn in a perfect paper.

Many examples were given in preceding chapters of ways of involving children in discussions of their own reading problems. "That was the word that was hard for you, wasn't it, Jill? I'm glad you remembered." "Andy was really trying to hold his book so that we all could hear him, wasn't he? Don't you think he did better?' As suggested in preceding chapters, such appraisals go on at many points—in planning sessions, in evaluation periods, in group reading periods, as teachers work with individual children. Reading, in itself, is interesting and challenging to children. Discovering what one needs to work on next in order to read more skillfully can be just as interesting and challenging if it is made an integral part of children's reading activities.

Give group members an opportunity to work cooperatively in the appraisal process. Children grow in their insight into their own strengths and weaknesses by participating in group activities where they appraise each other. This is particularly true of more mature readers. In these group activities the teacher does not relinquish her responsibility as leader. Typically, she works with the children until desirable standards are established, leaves them to help each other while she works with other groups, and then returns to pick up

special difficulties. In one intermediate-grade classroom five groups laid plans to read stories aloud. After a discussion of what makes for a good presentation to an audience, each group went to work. While the teacher divided her time among the groups and gave help wherever she could, the bulk of the improvement came as group members made suggestions to each other. In another class the children talked through standards for good reports based on extensive reading in social studies. Then each child read his report for criticism by others in his small group. In a third class, spelling partners worked to help each other develop better skills in analyzing words. This, too, involved a mutual effort to figure out where present techniques were inadequate.

Teachers are sometimes fearful lest group criticism embarrass and discourage a child. However, this is not likely to happen in situations where all group members have a common concern, and the generous approval frequently given to a child who has shown improvement often can be very helpful in morale-building. Furthermore, the cooperative appraisal process increases manyfold the total amount of help available to each child and helps all group members to grow in their sensitivity to a job well done.

Help children share in keeping records. Record keeping is another aspect of the appraisal process through which the members of a class can be helped to develop insight into their own strengths and weaknesses and to build standards for their work. Here, too, the degree of participation increases with increasing maturity.

Many types of records in which children may share have been mentioned in preceding chapters. They may keep records of their reading—lists of library books, simple bibliographies of books used for informational reading, lists of basal readers with which they have worked. They may share in a number of types of diagnostic records—notebooks of difficult words, check lists of oral-reading skills, notebooks containing spelling pretests and final tests kept as an aid in identifying word-analysis difficulties, check sheets indicating the results of periodic tests of silent-reading skills, collections of work-type activities. Older children may also make simple graphs of their progress—records of reading rate, the percentages correct in series of work-type exercises, graphs of the numbers of special work-type practice sheets completed. In addition, children can share in deciding on typical samples of their work to file or on materials that should be kept to help parents understand their activities—notebooks con-

taining reports of unit activities, collections of book reviews, special outlines or summaries.

Just as teachers need to analyze and to summarize the evidence accumulating in children's folders, so teachers and children together need to look for signs of progress and for needs for help. Some of this appraising is done informally as the record-keeping process moves forward. As children enter new books in their library records, they talk about the number and the kinds of books they have read. As they complete a check of oral-reading skills, they look to see how last week's record compares. As they study their errors in a spelling pretest, they make a list of the phonograms they need to learn. As they decide to save a special piece of work to show their parents, they look at earlier work to see how much they have improved. Some appraisal goes on in individual conferences, as teacher and child talk over what should go into a report to parents, or plan for special practice. Records that do not contribute to on-going classroom activities have little place, whether they are collected by the teacher alone or by teacher and children jointly.

USING STANDARDIZED TESTS

Many standardized tests are available for use in the appraisal process. They can be classified in two main categories: *group tests* and *individual tests*. Group tests can be given to the whole class at one time. They are designed to survey various silent reading skills, and the children work with them quietly after some simple group directions. Individual tests must be given to one child at a time. The child answers aloud and the examiner records his responses in a special record booklet. An individual test is needed to measure such skills as oral reading, certain aspects of word recognition and word analysis, ability to give sound equivalents for letters and letter combinations, and ability to hear likenesses and differences among words. Both group and individual tests can be diagnostic if they are designed to provide subtest scores for several skills. In most situations group tests are used to survey the abilities of a class. Individual tests, or informal diagnoses from classroom performance, may then be used for a more careful study of children who are having difficulty. Group tests are constructed so that they can be given by the regular classroom teacher whereas individual tests call for somewhat more training on the part of the examiner.

Reading tests measure the same skills that a child is using in his

daily reading activities. Primary group tests typically get at the child's ability to recognize words and to read simple sentences and easy paragraphs. Often the test items use pictures in questions similar to the exercises in a typical primary workbook. Usually the time limit is generous. At the intermediate level, where children can be expected to use flexible reading techniques for a greater variety of purposes, tests are available to measure more aspects of reading skills. Frequently a single test yields several subtest scores. A subtest of ability to read paragraphs of increasing difficulty is often included. So is some measure of reading rate. Subtests of vocabulary are common. These may assess a child's general stock of word meanings or his special knowledge of terms in the content fields. Evidence of the flexibility of the techniques of more skilled readers may be secured through tests of such specific skills as following directions, noting details, getting the general impression of a paragraph, or predicting outcomes. In addition, teachers of older children may get measures of their reference skills—ability to use an index or a dictionary, to read maps and graphs, to make outlines.

Because reading tests merely provide another way of looking at the same reading skills that teachers are appraising from day to day, it is not essential to plan elaborate testing programs in order to provide effective reading experiences. However, many teachers feel that tests are a helpful objective check on their judgment. Often tests are used as part of a city-wide testing program and provide useful information about the child who transfers from school to school. When standardized tests are part of the appraisal process it is important that they be used effectively. A teacher needs to be able to select the test appropriate for her particular situation, to administer and score it properly, and, perhaps most difficult, to interpret the test scores, both for the class as a whole and for individual children.

Selecting Appropriate Tests

Does the test measure the abilities the teacher wishes to appraise? Because standardized tests measure different skills or different combinations of skills, a person who is responsible for selecting tests needs to examine more than one before making a choice. Subtests of word meaning and of sentence and paragraph comprehension measure basic abilities on which any class appropriately may be tested, but there are distinct differences from class to class in the

times at which such specific techniques as using a dictionary, outlining, summarizing, and using other reference skills are stressed and in the point at which reading rate becomes important to measure. A teacher should choose the test that will provide objective evidence in the areas in which she most wants to corroborate her judgment. It is not a reflection on the type of reading program provided for a group of children if a standardized test happens to measure skills which, for the moment, are not a point of focus. Tests are not serving their proper function if the particular selection of subtests made by the author determines the reading program. The responsibility of deciding which skills are of immediate importance to a group needs to remain in the hands of their teacher.

Does the test include sufficient items to measure the abilities of the best and the poorest readers? Choosing a test that measures the skills about which a teacher needs information does not mean selecting a test that covers exactly what children have been taught. A standardized test should provide a measure of a child's full ability. It is important to choose one that contains ample material to challenge the best reader in the class. If a child makes a perfect score or even comes within a question or two of a perfect score, it can usually be assumed that the test is too easy for him and that the full extent of his reading ability has not been measured. It is important, also, not to discourage the child who is a poor reader. For example, the poorest readers in a third grade will have a distressing time with a test recommended for grades three through six if the norms are such that a child need have only three questions correct to secure a grade score of 3.0. If, on the other hand, a test is designed so that a child needs to answer eight or ten questions correctly to secure a grade score of 3.0, even a third-grader with limited reading skill will have some success before the test questions become too difficult for him. Sometimes to secure an adequate measure of children's abilities it is desirable to give, first, a test that seems appropriate for the average and below-average readers in the room, and to follow this with a more advanced test for the children who make perfect or near perfect scores.

How much additional help is provided in the test manual? Tests vary in the amount of help provided for the teacher in the test manual. It is appropriate to consider this factor in choosing between two tests that otherwise seem equally usable. Clear directions for administering and for scoring the test should be expected, and should

be followed exactly. In addition a teacher should expect to find a reasonably detailed description of the purposes of the test and some information about the groups upon which the norms were developed and the degree to which the test has proven reliable and valid. Discussions of how to make out class record lists and how to interpret the test norms can be helpful. Sometimes norms for different population groups will be provided—private schools, urban schools, rural schools. Suggestions of how to use subtest scores to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of a particular child or of a group may also be given. In some manuals it may even be possible to find illustrative case studies of individual children and suggested remedial activities. The use of a standardized test should rarely stop with the making out of a class list. The teacher needs all the additional help a test author can provide.

Interpreting Test Scores

Interpret grade scores in the light of related information about children's growth. The test norms of most reading tests at the elementary school level are given as age and grade scores. Since it is customary to think of a child's ability in terms of the grade level at which he reads, a grade score often conveys more meaning than the corresponding age score. The related factors that need to be considered in evaluating test scores were discussed earlier in this chapter. A teacher needs to ask what the general intellectual level and the maturity of her class seems to be; to consider what other areas of growth have needed to be stressed; and to ask whether the test has measured skills that have been important points of focus for her group.

It is also important to study a child's test scores in the light of his performance from day to day. Tests are not completely reliable. The progress of a child who has made a full year's growth, or better, may not be apparent in his test scores. He may, for example, by a combination of skill and lucky guesses perform at the top level of his ability on the first test, and on the second make a minimum score because of a few careless errors or unfortunate guesses. Then, too, tests do not measure all the factors that go into increased reading skill. A child may make marked gains in interest in reading and in the ease with which he handles certain types of materials, without making appreciably higher test scores. Furthermore, all tests are not standardized on exactly the same population groups, and slight

variations in norms from one test battery to another may operate to exaggerate or to minimize the gains that have actually been made. Teachers who work with the same test over several years often develop helpful insights into its particular strengths and weaknesses. These insights are important in the interpreting of scores.

When due allowance has been made for other factors, test scores can be enlightening. Sometimes the weaknesses of a child who has been covering up his confusion by answering obvious questions, clowning, or bluffing will become apparent. Sometimes a child who has been indifferent will display ability that has not been revealed in his classroom work. The results of standardized tests should not be brushed aside merely because they do not correspond with the teacher's judgment. It is always important to take a careful second look.

Study the profiles of subtest scores. Helpful information about a child's strengths and weaknesses can be secured by studying the patterns of his subtest scores. This may also be done for a class by calculating mean or median scores. In one first grade the class average on a test of word recognition was high. On a test of paragraph reading, however, the class average was relatively low. This was a situation in which there had been an overemphasis upon isolated word-study activities, and the test scores revealed clearly the limited experience in working with story-type materials. In another first grade differences in subtest scores provided helpful diagnostic evidence about a youngster who had unusual ability to make shrewd guesses from context. This child earned a high score on a test of paragraph reading, but his inability to distinguish clearly between words of similar configuration when he met them in isolation was revealed in a low word-recognition score. In the intermediate grades it is often helpful to compare a score on an untimed comprehension test with that on a test of reading speed. Sometimes differences in subtest scores will enable the teacher to identify the child who grasps the general idea of the passage but who does not read accurately for details, or the reverse. Often a low score on a word meaning subtest helps to explain errors on the more difficult items of a test of paragraph meaning. Typical interrelationships among reading skills were analyzed at several points in earlier chapters. A study of subtest patterns can lead to many insightful diagnostic hunches if a teacher is aware of these interrelationships.

Take a look at the way the child worked. It is often helpful to go back to the child's test booklet to study the way he worked. This is the same procedure a teacher might use in studying any work-type activity, and the patterns of errors to look for are much the same. In primary tests of word recognition it may be possible to note consistent errors, such as failure to look carefully at the middles of words or insufficient attention to endings. A pattern of correct answers on items containing words known to be within a child's reading vocabulary and consistent errors on those containing words known to be unfamiliar may indicate limited word-analysis skills. In a test of paragraph comprehension that increases gradually in difficulty, a sprinkling of errors from the easiest to the most difficult paragraphs may suggest careless reading, too rapid reading, or perhaps limited word-analysis skill that results in errors whenever the context contains words that the child cannot recognize at sight. Correct answers on a test of paragraph reading if only a limited number of questions are completed suggest slow reading speed. Such insights are helpful as guides in planning for special practice activities. They are also helpful in appraising a child's test scores.

Use a sliding scale in deciding on the seriousness of retardation. Discrepancies between a child's performance on a reading test and his potential ability need to be interpreted differently for different grade levels. This is true also in using test scores as a guide to the grade levels of books a child is likely to be able to handle with ease. If a test score is reasonably accurate, it can be used as a rough indication of the basal-reader level with which a child might be expected to work. For easy reading without help, he probably should have a book graded somewhat lower than the grade score he made on a test. How much trouble he will have with more difficult materials depends on the grade level at which he is reading. In the early primary grades, reading material increases quite rapidly in difficulty of vocabulary load, sentence length, and paragraph length. A child whose reading achievement is grade 1.5 could be expected to have considerable difficulty with a second-grade book. By the end of third grade a half year's retardation would not be as great a handicap. In sixth grade, a test score of grade 5.5 does not usually predict that a child will have insurmountable difficulty in working with sixth-grade books. In terms of practical classroom planning, then, retardation of a half year to a year in the lower primary grades will usually call

for special adjustments of materials and teaching methods. In the fifth and sixth grades the degree of retardation should be somewhat greater before special adjustments need to be given serious consideration.

Consider the use of individual diagnostic tests to investigate special difficulties. Extensive diagnostic test batteries, such as those of Durrell [7] and of Gates [8] can be used to supplement the evidence secured from group tests if children appear to be having unusual difficulty. These batteries provide, in standardized form, the tests needed to make a detailed inventory of those aspects of reading skill that cannot be measured by silent reading tests. They include subtests of oral reading, of word recognition, of phrase reading, of ability to respond to syllables, phonograms, and letters of the alphabet, of ability to hear sounds, and others. The record booklets that accompany these batteries include check lists of special difficulties and suggestions for case studies.

Diagnostic test batteries are instruments that a classroom teacher can learn to use. As mentioned earlier, they require more skill on the part of the examiner than do group tests. There is nothing magical about the types of insights into a child's difficulties that they yield. The evidence is essentially the same as that secured by an experienced teacher as she studies a child's pattern of errors as he reads difficult paragraphs aloud, listens to him work out the analysis of unfamiliar words, or works with him on a series of work-type activities that reveal his problems with phonograms, syllables, and letter sounds. Although the scores from diagnostic tests may sharpen patterns of weaknesses and strengths, they should agree at many points with what a teacher already knows about a child.

Some follow-up, whether it be through the appropriate parts of a diagnostic battery or through informal classroom tests, should be made when the child's performance on a silent reading test suggests that he is having unusual trouble. This is particularly important if the pattern of his subtest scores does not seem to offer any particular explanation for his difficulty. Many helpful insights can come from asking a child to do a little work aloud. A word-by-word approach to silent reading sometimes reveals itself in poor phrasing when a child reads aloud. A hint that a child can read with good comprehension if he knows the vocabulary of the material he is reading at

[7] Donald D. Durrell, *op. cit.*
[8] Arthur I. Gates, *op. cit.*

sight but that he is hampered by poor word-analysis skills can be followed up by watching his pattern of errors when oral-reading paragraphs become difficult. Flashing a list of words to a child for instant recognition and then seeing how many more he can get when he has all the time he needs to study them also helps to reveal word-analysis difficulties. Asking a child how he works, as suggested earlier, often reveals where his techniques are inadequate. With children who are remedial cases, particularly, such a careful systematic look at possible sources of trouble is essential.

Compare classes or schools with great caution. There are few procedures capable of arousing more tension and unnecessary concern on the part of teachers than that of calculating class averages and making public at the end of the school year comparisons of schools or of classes. These figures do not necessarily reveal the fact that the program for an able group of children has provided little of challenge or that a program for a group with limited ability has resulted in remarkable gains. Furthermore, even an extensive battery of standardized tests will measure only a limited number of the total objectives of the reading program. A sure way to destroy a good program for a group of children is to give their teacher the feeling that the most important result of the year's experiences should be a set of high test scores in May.

If standardized tests are to be an aid in developing the reading program, they should be given at a time when the scores will be of the greatest help to the teacher in planning experiences for her group. Often this means testing in the early fall rather than in the spring so that there are fresh scores available as an additional guide in selecting reading materials and in setting up reading groups. Even when no comparisons of classes are being made, teachers sometimes tend to blame themselves if their class averages on a set of tests given in the spring do not come up to expectancies. There may be less unfortunate feeling of personal involvement if a teacher faces the strengths or shortcomings of her group with a year's work still ahead of her.

Help children share in the testing program. Children have a right to know the purposes of a test. Often considerable anxiety can develop if a child begins to suspect that a test will affect the grade on his report card, or perhaps his promotion to the next class. Even able readers may become concerned if parts of a test prove difficult for them. The more mature the group and the more general sophistica-

tion they have about school procedures the more important it is to take steps to allay apprehensions such as these.

There are many ways of helping children understand the purposes of a testing program. If they are accustomed to discussing their own strengths and weaknesses objectively, a test may be introduced as "another way of helping us to decide just where you need help the most." It can be made quite explicit that the purpose is to see how the children's work compares with that of boys and girls in other parts of the country, not to secure a grade for a report card. Anxiety about difficult parts of the test can sometimes be prevented by saying, "This test is planned for boys and girls of several grades. Don't worry if you find some of it hard." Giving a test in the fall, preliminary to the year's work, rather than in the spring when nothing is ahead except grades and promotions many reduce children's anxieties as well as those of their teacher.

Some teachers who are accustomed to appraising strengths and weaknesses objectively with their groups have found it possible to discuss exact grade scores. One teacher began with a small group of retarded readers by talking about the general purpose of the test and then saying, "Allen, where do you think your score was?" "Pretty low," said Allen. 'You're right," said his teacher. "It shows that we were right in starting you with a third grade book. Now let's plan how your special work in reading can help you." This same teacher also discussed high scores, taking care to point out areas other than reading in which the better readers could recognize that they, too, needed special help. Another teacher, whose children knew they were assigned to her because of remedial needs, posted actual test scores. Across from each child's score on the fall test was a question mark, to be filled in when the group was retested in the spring "It's not where you started but how far you can go and how hard you work," was the motto in both these classrooms.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

Home-school cooperation plays an important part in a child's school adjustment. Parents need to have a clear picture of a child's progress, his strengths, and his weaknesses. Furthermore, if they are to give intelligent cooperation to the teacher, they need to understand, at least in general terms, the methods by which he is being taught. In return, parents can supply much helpful information about their children.

Use methods of reporting that give the full picture. One of the problems of great concern in schools today is that of developing satisfactory methods of reporting to parents. No matter how carefully they are thought out, ratings or letter grades, whether the system is one of grades from *A* to *F* or ratings of *Satisfactory, Improving,* and *Unsatisfactory,* cannot tell the complete story. One of their greatest disadvantages is that they cannot convey, at one and the same time, an estimate of the child's progress in relation to his potential ability and a picture of his present status in his group. For example, who should receive the *A,* fourth-grade Joan who has the mentality of a sixth-grader and who is coasting with good fourth-grade work, or fourth-grade Sammy, who has the intellectual ability of a third-grader and who, through outstanding effort, can now cope with a fourth-grade book? It is sometimes argued that the child's actual achievement is the important consideration, but are Joan's parents really content to know that she is only a little ahead of her group when her potential ability is so great? Is the important information for Sammy's parents the fact that intellectual tasks are not his forte? And what of the attitudes of Joan and Sammy as they carry home their report cards? Do Joan's parents want her to learn to set standards for herself in relation to the average achievement of the group? And do Sammy's parents want him to classify himself as inadequate and inferior because in one area he does not have as great a natural endowment as some of his friends?

Letter grades based on potential ability can be equally misleading and equally productive of undesirable attitudes. Suppose, in terms of achievement in relation to potential ability, Joan receives the *C* and Sammy the *A*. Are Joan's parents not to be helped to see that their child has unusual ability? And should Sammy's parents not be helped to understand that college is likely to be very difficult for him, that careful choice of high school courses may be needed, or perhaps that it may be desirable to hold him in the same grade for a year in order to let him work with younger children? What of Joan and Sammy? Will this grading system help them to grow in realistic understanding of their own abilities?

Teachers, too, have difficulty as they try to interpret the letter grades on children's cumulative records. Ranges in ability will differ from class to class. Is a teacher of a class, all of whom have limited potential ability, to defeat them time after time by giving grades of *C* and *D* to their best efforts? How high a standard should be ex-

pected of a group of able children if letter grades of *A* are to go upon their permanent record cards? What interpretations are teachers to place upon the letter grades on report cards of children coming from several classes within one school, or from several schools?

The mental hygiene considerations connected with the problem of recording and reporting progress are important. It is not conducive to a child's ultimate well-being to evaluate his work in such a way that he builds an unrealistic picture of his ability. He needs to know where his strengths lie and where he has weaknesses. As an adult, he is likely to lead a more useful and satisfying life if he has learned to accept himself for what he is and to set goals for himself that are within the realm of possible achievement. Furthermore, it is not a defeating experience for a child to face his inadequacies as long as he also faces his strengths and as long as he participates actively in plans that he knows will help him improve. Children have a right to be helped to understand themselves, to accept themselves, to learn how to solve their own problems, and to learn how to make the most of their abilities. This means using a system of recording and reporting progress that conveys clear information to a child as well as to his parents.

Many examples have already been given of ways in which children can be helped to make objective appraisals of their work. To share these insights with parents, teachers in many school systems have begun to use letters or other written statements, or, better still, conferences with parents as means of reporting. In some school systems these devices have replaced letter grades completely; in others they supplement and help to interpret the letter grades.

In the give-and-take of a conference situation it is easier both to answer a parent's questions and to learn from a parent information that will be helpful in working with a child. Remedial measures or special adjustments of materials and methods can also be interpreted more readily. "Yes, she did get a bad start last year when she was ill, and she was very discouraged when she came this fall. We started with very easy books so that she could be successful and she is just about ready now for third-grade books." "No, he hasn't been working much with basal readers. He reads very well and most of them are too easy for him. The group he is with has been exploring a great variety of library books. Here is a record of his reading for the past month." "Her group has been doing a lot of special word study. You

could help with her spelling if you would dictate the words very distinctly for her so that she can listen for the sounds."

Letters home do not offer the flexible give-and-take and the opportunity to show actual examples of a child's work that are possible in a conference, but they can convey much more information than a grade. They need to be specific If they become stereotyped much of their value is lost. "Mary is improving" or 'Jerry needs more help" are statements that are, in some ways, less informative than ratings of *Satisfactory, Improving,* or *Unsatisfactory.* Furthermore, they need to be phrased so that parents do not have to struggle with technical terms and pedaguese. And, to convey the necessary information, they sometimes have to be long The comments on a first-, a fourth-, and a sixth grader's progress in reading included in such letters might read as follows

When Joan started to school this fall, she had many adjustments to make, as you know She now works and plays with other children very well Just recently she was the one the children chose to be the princess in some dramatic play You will recall how much trouble she was having with the activities in our readiness book when you visited us at Thanksgiving? Now she is doing quite well with the stories in a preprimer. She will need to start with easy first grade books next year

Mary started the year reading third grade books She rarely went near the library table This month she has taken home four library books She has worked all year with a group who were given special help in reading Now they are tackling their second fourth grade book. This represents excellent progress You may help by encouraging her to borrow library books Do not worry if she chooses short ones that do not seem to be at fourth grade level She needs to learn that reading is fun

Art is an excellent reader However, he does not always make full use of his ability. Over the year it was hard to keep him supplied with library books, but in his social studies and science he sometimes failed to take the time to get the full information he needed Once in a while the children accused him of bluffing Art tells me that he is going to build an amateur radio set this summer. The detailed reading he will have to do could be helpful It might also be a challenge to him to be given some easy interesting adult non fiction, such as the advanced books on the enclosed summer reading list

Reporting to parents through conferences or letters is very time-consuming. Many teachers who would prefer to report by these means have given up when faced with the almost impossible task of doing the job without help two or three times a year for as many as

forty youngsters. Administrators need to experiment with various methods of facilitating the process. Sometimes the children in one class can be taken by a substitute or by other teachers for an afternoon while their teacher confers with parents. Even the provision of secretarial assistance to type letters to parents can provide considerable relief.

What of the teachers in school systems where letter grades or similar ratings are the accepted and the expected means of reporting progress? There is no completely satisfactory resolution of the dilemma of how to convey several kinds of information in a single rating. In some schools a partial solution has been to use a second grade to indicate effort, and then to stress to children that this is the important rating. Certainly, whatever the decision as to the meaning of the rating, it should be adhered to uniformly throughout the school system. It is helpful, also, to interpret the general basis of the rating system to parents. This may call for conferences, letters, or perhaps discussions in meetings of the Parent-Teachers Association. Whatever the rating system, parents need to be informed when a child is having trouble. It can be very disturbing both to parents and to child if a series of *A's* and *B's*, for a child of limited ability, are followed at the end of the year by the recommendation that he spend a second year in the same grade.

Methods of reporting to parents are more easily revised when parents and teachers work together on the problem. It is just as important to involve those who are to interpret reports in the preliminary planning as it is to involve those who are to write them. Often a joint effort to revise the reporting system is more successful if the opening question for discussion is, "What do you want to know about your children?" rather than, "What rating system should we use?" After there is a clear picture of the type of information desired, proposals about how best to give it can be examined in sharper focus.

Give children a share in the reporting process. Children need to be involved in the reporting process. It is an important aspect of the appraisal of their work, and their attitudes toward their own achievements will necessarily be influenced both by the type of report that goes home and by their parents' reactions to it. They can often help in the process of interpreting to parents if they have shared in preparing the report. Even young children can have a part in dictating a letter to tell their parents about their school activities. Older chil-

dren can write their own letters, to be included with those of the teacher, or can help the teacher decide what information her letter should contain. A child can also share in a conference by showing a parent his work or by telling about some of his activities. In addition, children can help to collect typical samples of their work to show their parents, and can sit down with the teacher to evaluate the evidence in a cumulative folder before a report is sent home. If a system of letter grades is being used, it is often helpful to talk over with a child the meaning of his grade. These activities do not necessarily call for much additional time expenditure. They can be planned so that they contribute to the appraisal process from day to day while they serve the larger purpose of bringing children, parents, and teachers closer together.

Interpret the principles underlying modern teaching methods. Parents can interpret reports of their children's activities more effectively if they have a background of general understanding of the philosophy of the school and of the psychological principles underlying modern teaching methods. While no one would dispute the importance of a teacher's professional background to her effectiveness in the classroom, the fundamental principles underlying good teaching are no more difficult for intelligent laymen to understand than they are for intelligent teachers. Nor do these principles seem any less reasonable to one group than they do to the other. Parents have a right and an obligation to understand the reasoning back of the methods being used to educate their children and school personnel have an equal obligation to help them to acquire this understanding.

Many helpful joint steps have been taken. Parents and teachers have worked together in study groups. Parent-Teacher Associations have planned programs focussing on teaching methods. Often teachers have developed helpful displays of children's work or have planned demonstrations for such meetings. In some schools, large parents' meetings have alternated with smaller sessions where mothers have met in discussion groups led by the teachers of their children. Some schools have made effective use of spring meetings of parents whose children will enter first grade in the fall. Interested community members have been invited to spend a day in school. Sometimes parents have been invited to visit classrooms for the hour preceding afternoon Parent-Teacher Association meetings. It has also proven helpful to have parents visit individually to watch their child

at work before they have a conference with his teacher. Modern methods explain and justify themselves when they can be observed.

School personnel have also experimented with written interpretations of their programs. In one first grade this was a one-page hectographed bulletin *About Ourselves,* written jointly by teacher and children and sent home once a week. Leaflets describing aspects of the school program have sometimes been included with report cards. Use has also been made of some of the recent bulletins written for lay people, of which typical examples are given in the suggested readings at the end of this chapter. These may serve as study guides for discussion groups, or as helpful reading for individuals.

Children can help to interpret modern methods if they, themselves, have been encouraged to think about the reasons for their work. One teacher took time at the end of a unit to ask the children what they had learned. After they had made a list, the length and variety of which surprised them, she asked if they thought their parents would be interested in seeing copies. This suggestion was met with enthusiasm and the children went home with their lists, eager to explain. Another teacher helped her class to think through their learnings in a social-studies unit in terms parents would recognize. For an open-house, this group prepared charts analyzing the unit—*What We Read; What Arithmetic We Needed; What We Needed to Write; What Facts We Learned; How We Worked.* Children have also learned to interpret their school activities by helping to decide what kinds of work should be on display for an open-house in order to give parents the full picture of their work. Then, too, individual classes can plan special activities to share aspects of their work with their parents. Examples were given in chapter XI of reading units planned by the children to show their parents how they learned to read and what kinds of stories they liked. Often teachers have used part of the time given to such special programs to allow children to tell in their own words how they worked and what they thought they learned.

Teachers, themselves, must understand modern methods if they are to interpret them. This implies a critical and intelligent appraisal of classroom procedures. It means participation in professional organizations, in curriculum committees, and in other groups concerned with the continuous evaluation of the educational program. It implies also that administrative personnel will take pains to keep the school library of professional books well stocked.

The teacher, then, is at the heart of the appraisal process. In the classroom she is the one who takes major responsibility for setting the goals for her group and for evaluating their progress toward these goals. It is her insight into the child's performance from day to day that plays a major part in determining the skills he needs and the experiences that will be most profitable for him. The way in which she works with her children determines the degree to which they develop insight into their own problems and interest in developing better skills. As a member of the school faculty, she shares in the appraisal of the total school program and helps to take leadership in involving parents and interested community members in providing more challenging learning situations for boys and girls.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING THE APPRAISAL, RECORDING, AND REPORTING PROCESSES

Does the appraisal process make a maximum contribution to on-going classroom activities?

Have children been given a share in the appraising, recording, and reporting processes?

Is children's growth being appraised in the light of broad understanding of the skills needed by effective readers in a democratic society?

Do the standards held for individual children take their maturity and potential ability into account?

Do the standards held for individual children take their related growth needs into account?

Have ways been worked out for studying progress and problems in on-going classroom situations?

Does the record-keeping process make a functional contribution to daily classroom activities?

Are standardized tests used in such a way as to be of maximum help to the classroom teacher?

Does the system of reporting to parents provide them with a clear picture of the child's progress and his potentialities?

Are parents and teachers together making a critical appraisal of the total reading program?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Implications of Child Development for the Appraisal Process

Anderson, Irving H. and Dearborn, Walter F. *The Psychology of Teaching Reading*. chapter 1. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952. Pp. x + 382.

Durrell, Donald D. *Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities*, chapter 3. Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, 1940. Pp. viii + 407.

Helping Teachers Understand Children. Prepared by the staff of the Division on Child Development and Teacher Personnel for the Commission on

CHAPTER XIV

CARING FOR THE CHILD WHO NEEDS REMEDIAL HELP

CHILDREN WITH PROBLEMS

Children struggle to overcome accidents that caused them to fall behind their groups. In fourth grade, Tony is working with a second-grade book. Two intelligence test records of I Q.'s over 115 confirm his teacher's judgment that he is an able child. Recurring colds kept him at home for much of the winter in the first grade. He was then promoted to an overcrowded second grade where he made little progress in learning to read. His third-grade teacher was able to help him overcome some of his discouragement and frustration, but even now in fourth grade his progress is still slow. In class discussion he has much to contribute because he and his family have travelled extensively in the summer. In spite of his limited reading skill, the children like Tony and look to him for leadership.

Karen, across the hall in third grade, is new to the school. In her first two years of school she had twelve different teachers as she and her mother moved from town to town in order to be near her father. She is just beginning to read a first reader with success. Karen faces the added problems of having few friends and of being very shy with other children, although she gets along well with adults.

Children attempt difficult tasks with inadequate techniques. In fourth grade, Monica seems to get the general idea of a passage quite well, but she makes occasional surprising mistakes in reporting specific details. In reading aloud, she stumbles over many of the longer words. In her spelling tests she shows little ability to recognize syllables or other sound elements. Her third-grade teacher reports that she showed remarkable skill in recognizing words by their general configuration. This approach to new words seems to be the only one she is using this year with the more difficult vocabulary of the content fields.

Upstairs in the sixth grade, Dennis is a painstakingly slow and accurate reader. His work is usually well done, but his mother is worried

because he spends three or four hours a night on his homework. Many emotional scenes have developed at home because his parents insist that he go to bed while he protests that he will be given a low grade if his work is not done.

Children struggle with personal handicaps. In grade five, Mike has just come with new glasses. For the past month he has been complaining that it hurt his eyes to read. Although both his parents and his teacher suspected that this might be an excuse to avoid situations in which he needed to read, they had a specialist check. A pronounced visual difficulty that had not been caught in the screening tests used by the school nurse was uncovered.

Scottie, in second grade, has a Stanford-Binet I.Q. of 84. He is just now ready to do successful work with first-grade materials. His progress will depend on whether easy books are available for him and on whether his teacher is skilled in the techniques of beginning reading. Other teachers are also going to have to adjust to his limited ability if his progress is to be assured.

Children try to live up to discouraging expectations. Joel is just ending his year in first grade. His sister was in the same room a year before and progressed rapidly in learning to read. Everyone expected Joel to do equally well. Now, at the end of the year, he is still immature. He has difficulty working with other children and has shown no particular interest in reading as yet, although he has worked his way through several preprimers. His teacher advises that he be allowed to develop at his own pace, but his parents are wondering if he might not be given some special tutoring over the summer.

Roberta's parents are already planning for her college career although she is only in fifth grade. She has only average intellectual ability, but she takes endless pains with her work. She is unduly tense and anxious whenever she makes a mistake. Her parents take great pride in her report cards and plan a special family party whenever she brings home an *A*. Roberta seldom reads for pleasure. When she does, she selects a book that looks grown-up and difficult. She does a good job when she has an assignment that calls for exact reporting of details, but she is fearful of expressing her own opinion lest she make a mistake.

Jeff's teacher does not believe children should be promoted to the next grade unless they can handle the books normally read at that level. She has used many extrinsic devices to encourage her children to read. There is a special ceremony when a child is moved to a reading group working with harder materials. Children who choose difficult library books are praised. Jeff is in particular disfavor with some of his classmates because his low grades in reading have kept his row from coming in first in a weekly race. Recently he has taken to finding excuses to leave the room during reading activities. In his reading group, he clowns and disrupts the group in other ways.

Children have trouble because of emotional pressures unrelated to reading. Phyllis made excellent progress through the first two grades.

Now, in third grade, she is facing the fact that her parents are planning a divorce. For a time she has been living with her grandmother. On a number of occasions she has awakened with an upset stomach and has been unable to come to school. When she does attend, she is likely to daydream unless her teacher is right at her side. After one prolonged crying spell, her teacher was able to elicit the information that Phyllis was interpreting a quarrel she had overheard to mean that nobody wanted her. All her school work is suffering.

George is a confused and unhappy first-grader. He was given no warning that his little sister was on the way and faced the problem of adjusting to school and that of learning to share his parent's affection at the same time. He is constantly at the teacher's side with special requests for help. He gives up and cries after a feeble attempt to tie his own shoes or to button a difficult button. The other children have not accepted him because he snatches their things. Although he gives evidence of being an intelligent child, George has not been able to concentrate on reading activities well enough to make much progress.

In spite of skilled teachers, interesting and well graded reading materials, and genuine concern on the part of parents, some children have far more difficulty learning to read than they might be expected to have. These youngsters are to be found in every grade, even into high school and college, working laboriously at tasks that should be easy, feeling discouraged and often out of place because others have so much less trouble, and avoiding as often as they can situations requiring them to read.

An effective reading program for a school or for a single classroom must be planned so that there are provisions for identifying problems early and for giving efficient help. Although specialists in diagnostic and remedial methods may be available in some school systems, there are many in which the full responsibility for the child who needs remedial help will fall to the classroom teacher. This chapter is focussed on two problems: what causes a child to become a remedial problem, and what steps can be taken in the regular classroom setting to give him the help he needs.

WHY DOES A CHILD HAVE TROUBLE LEARNING TO READ?

The word *remedial* stems from *remedy*. The child who presents a remedial problem is the one whose reading capacity is appreciably greater than his present level of reading achievement. Suggestions of ways of adjusting reading experiences to meet the needs of children of a wide range of ability, all of whom are making full use of their potentialities, are given at many points in preceding chapters. Such normal adjustments for varying levels of ability are not remedial. In

the case of the child who is given remedial help, there is the expectation that skilled teaching, together with intensive practice, will result in marked progress. As the term is typically used, not all children whose achievement falls short of their potential ability are classified as having remedial problems. A very able child, who handles the typical reading activities of his classroom well, actually may be operating several grades below his potential ability. This youngster needs help. However, he does not need the carefully planned practice and the adjusted reading materals that are typical of a remedial program. The focus of this chapter is upon the child who fails to make the progress that might be expected of him and whose lack of skill also causes him to have major difficulty in participating in the reading experiences of his class.

There is no simple explanation of failure to learn to read. In Robinson's [1] intensive case studies of individual children, referred to in Chapter III in the discussion of reading readiness, no one factor was found to account for the difficulty in all thirty cases. Thought-provoking, too, was the evidence that the retarded reader is likely to be struggling with a combination of other difficulties, not necessarily identifiable specifically as causes of the reading difficulty, and that the most retarded readers tend to have the greatest number of added difficulties. Other investigations reinforce these findings. In trying to understand the causes of a child's difficulty in learning to read, teachers must be prepared to take a case-study approach. Factors in home and in school are as important to consider as are factors of physical and intellectual development.

In making a case study of a child with reading difficulty, most teachers will find resources in the school and community upon which to draw for help. A useful aid in thinking through areas to explore is the *Diagnostic Child Study Record* prepared by Witty and Kopel.[2] Teachers who have had the child in previous years can often provide information. So can the principal. Often a supervisor can be helpful in observing the child's behavior in the classroom and in suggesting general procedures. A child's parents have much information of value. Often, it is desirable to consult with the family doctor and the oculist. A scout leader or a Sunday school teacher may have helpful insights. In large school systems, it may be possible to draw upon the resources of a bureau of psychological serv-

[1] Helen M. Robinson, *Why Pupils Fail in Reading*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1945.

[2] Paul Witty and David Kopel, *Diagnostic Child Study Record*. Evanston: Northwestern University Psycho-Educational Clinic, 1938.

ices. Wherever help in understanding a child is available, it should be tapped.

Physical or intellectual factors may be involved. Visual, auditory, and speech defects all need to be taken into account in looking for the cause of reading difficulty. So do health factors that might have kept a child out of school or have prevented him from responding with full alertness even if he was in school. As suggested in the earlier discussion of reading readiness, there is evidence that children have learned to read successfully in spite of various physical handicaps, but there are also on record cases where the physical difficulty seemed to be related directly to the reading problem.[3] However indirect the relationship appears to be, anything that will assist a child in seeing or in hearing more clearly, in pronouncing words more distinctly, or in responding with more alertness and vitality in the classroom is likely to facilitate the ease with which he learns.

The evidence regarding the relation of left-handedness and of mixed dominance to reading difficulty is not clear. Both Gates[4] and Robinson,[5] in reviewing the research, point to the difficulty of drawing any positive conclusions. Both writers, however, suggest that these factors be checked in the course of a diagnostic study of an individual child.

Children have learned to read in spite of limited intellectual ability. However, there is always the possibility that the reading program will not be flexible enough to meet the needs of the child who learns slowly. When this is the case, he may be confused and bewildered by experiences that make sense to the more able members of his group. Should such a child be so unfortunate as to be promoted to a second teacher who also fails to provide the help he needs, he can soon be far below the level at which he might be expected to achieve.

Home and community pressures may result in unfortunate attitudes. Learning to read often assumes great importance in the eyes of parents. Schools, in the early history of this country, were estab-

[3] Guy L. Bond, *A Study of the Auditory and Speech Characteristics of Poor Readers*, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 657. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935.

Paul Fendrick, *A Study of the Visual Characteristics of Poor Readers*, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 656. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935.

[4] Arthur I. Gates, *The Improvement of Reading*, pp. 106–107. Third Edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947

[5] Helen M. Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–47.

lished to help children learn to read and to write. Today, most parents occasionally may say without much tension, "His handwriting cannot be read," or "He spells just like his father," or "He takes after me, I never did like arithmetic." Many become genuinely concerned, however, if it becomes apparent that their child is not progressing as rapidly as they expected him to when he started to read. This concern is not necessarily a cause of difficulty in learning to read, but it often can add to the child's problems if he begins to have trouble. Unless there is great wisdom and forbearance in the home of the child whose progress in learning to read is temporarily slow, there may be emotionally charged tutoring sessions and worried exchanges of remarks over the dinner-table in the child's hearing. Sometimes there is open criticism of the school, which forces a child to divide his loyalties between his parents and his teacher. All this concern may magnify a child's difficulties in his own eyes which, in turn, may lead to more unhappy experiences and to still greater concern.

Every child needs to feel secure in the love and affection of his parents. Sometimes a child is unwisely compared with older siblings or with neighbors' children. If he discovers that he is not considered to be making satisfactory progress in a skill that is apparently important to his parents and easy for his brothers and sisters, he may feel that he has failed in an important competition for parental affection. Sometimes it is easier not to compete than it is to try to learn, and have the failure made even more apparent.

Learning to read can assume other undesirable emotional meanings for a child. One mother of an only child took great pleasure in reading to him. For several years beyond the time when he should have been reading independently he used his reading difficulty as a means of assuring her continued attention. Even when parents scold or punish, a youngster who is deprived of normal affection unconsciously may fail to learn in order to cling to this one proof that his family is concerned about him. Sometimes a child will be pulled between two parents. Mother is overanxious about his reading ability, and father jokes about the whole situation and points out that he, himself, never liked to read. Which parent is to be satisfied? Such problems are the more serious because the child has no conscious recognition of the meanings he is attaching to the process of learning to read, and parents and teachers frequently do not realize what is happening.

Concern about a child's progress in learning to read may extend beyond the home to the community. The little girl next door may say, "Can't you even read that book yet? That's baby stuff!" A neighbor remarks sympathetically over afternoon tea, "Don't worry, my dear. I'm sure he will soon be getting along all right." Grandmother says, "We learned to sound all those words when I went to school. I don't see how he will ever be able to read or to spell the way they teach today." Such pressures need to be reckoned with as possible factors contributing to a child's discouragement, to his panic when he cannot do all that the best readers in his class are doing, and to his conviction that skill in reading is beyond his power. Emotional tensions are not necessarily the original causes of failure to learn, but a large percentage of children who are retarded reveal emotional problems.[6]

Schools may set up unfortunate learning situations. Schools cannot be absolved of all responsibility when children fail to learn to read. Although the policy of adjusting materials and teaching techniques to the varied needs and abilities of a group is becoming widely accepted, it is by no means universal. There are still many classrooms poorly equipped to meet individual needs. Teachers who must work with a single basal reader or a single set of textbooks in a content field are greatly handicapped in giving the retarded reader the experience he needs, and almost as greatly handicapped in challenging the able child to make full use of his ability. The situation for the retarded reader is made no better if he fails to be promoted and must work with the same books the following year.

Teachers, themselves, are not always prepared to meet the needs of retarded readers. Sometimes there are conflicting philosophies regarding how to meet individual differences. A youngster who is just beginning to make progress with easy materials in first grade under a teacher who believes that a range of abilities should be expected in every classroom is in immediate difficulty if he is promoted to a teacher who feels that children should not be sent to her unless they can read second-grade books. Sometimes teachers who are anxious to adjust to the needs of individuals are not sure how to go about it—second-grade teachers may not know the methods of beginning reading, intermediate teachers, the techniques of the primary grades; high school teachers, the problems of teaching fourth- and fifth-graders. Sometimes, too, teachers overestimate the ease with which

[6] Helen M. Robinson, *op cit.*, pp. 76–90.

a child learns to read and assume erroneously that those who worked with him in previous years did not do a good job. Word analysis, for example, is an important point of emphasis in primary classrooms, but it is a complicated skill. Most children will need some additional help in the intermediate grades, and a few may just be beginning to work independently with words. If a fourth-grade teacher assumes that word analysis should not be part of her job and that this extra burden has been placed upon her because of the poor teaching of her primary colleagues, her attitude toward a child's problem is more than likely to add to his feeling of failure. The concept of reading readiness needs to be accepted throughout a school if children are to make consistent progress.

In spite of the greatest of care, transitions from the primary to the intermediate grades, and from the intermediate grades to the junior high school, may not be smooth. The difficulty level of reading materials often increases too rapidly for the child who has marginal ability and, in some cases, the reading problems he faces also increase in complexity too quickly. Teachers in these transitional grades have a special obligation to watch for signs of trouble. Often a few more months of intensive help with problems of word analysis, some carefully planned sessions on how to handle textbooks in the content fields, or some special guidance in how to use reference aids may make the difference between success and failure, discouragement, and gradual retardation.

Children's tensions and anxieties about poor work are sometimes increased by the grading system used in a school. When grades from *A* to *F* are used, the child who begins to have trouble may find himself receiving *C*'s, *D*'s, and *F*'s. Over a series of report cards he may accumulate an overwhelming amount of evidence that there is no use trying. In her study of the school adjustment of delinquent children Edwards reports on one boy who, by the time he was nine years old, had received a total of 106 failing marks for all subjects for all report periods.[7] Conferences or letters to parents, as discussed in the preceding chapter, are often much less anxiety-producing both for parents and for children.

Sometimes a very understandable anxiety on the part of school faculties to develop an effective reading program can place unfor-

[7] Vera C. Edwards, "A Study of the School Adjustment of Fifty-five Delinquent Children," p. 121. Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation. Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 1954.

tunate pressures on a child who begins to have trouble. The tensions that may be created when averages from standardized tests are used to rate teachers were discussed in the preceding chapter Overzealousness to give beginners a good start can sometimes result in the establishing of reading groups before children have developed sufficient readiness to have a successful year. Sometimes there may be unfortunate pressure on a child to work toward the best reading group or to choose recreational books that are "up to grade" Sometimes, without intending to, a teacher will give more praise and recognition to the good reader than to the child who has equally good achievement in another field. In classrooms where no other achievement results in the status that comes from being among the best readers, the child who cannot read may turn to undesirable means of securing recognition from his peers One of these may be to gain fame unconsciously as the person about whose reading difficulties everyone is concerned

Evidence from classroom work that a child is having difficulty concerns of parents, or critical reactions from community members need to be examined with care It is too easy merely to assume that the school program is sound and that critics are uninformed, parents are overanxious, or a child is lazy, careless, or indifferent One of the professional responsibilities of those planning a child's activities is to continue to appraise the total program, to identify weaknesses as well as strengths, and to work cooperatively toward more effective reading experiences.

Problems may develop from lack of continuity in school experience. Learning to read is a complicated process The child who, for any reason, is not able to work consistently at the job may begin to have trouble Recurring illness has already been mentioned as a possible source of difficulty Moving from school to school is another Conditions which result in a series of changes in staff during a single school year may also break the continuity in the learning process Remedial problems do not have to result from lack of continuity in experience If parents are patient, and teachers provide special help it may not be long before the child is again working up to capacity

Unfortunate habits sometimes go uncaught. Occasionally a child will learn one reading technique exceptionally well and then cling to it. Since his performance is often acceptable for the moment, his teacher does not always realize what he is doing until new material

has become so hard that the immature method fails completely. The child who is particularly adept at remembering the configurations of words and who suddenly begins to have trouble with word analysis in the upper third or fourth grades is an example of this sort of persistence of an inadequate way of working. Group discussions of reading skills, pupil evaluations of their own progress, and reading experiences that call for many types of skills are of help in catching such inadequacies early. Prevention of remedial problems is, at least in part, a matter of continuous appraisal.

Difficulty may lead to dislike of reading. Practice is a vital factor in good reading. Once a child begins to have difficulty, he may avoid further reading experiences if he can. He cannot read the new poster on the bulletin board because there are several words he does not know, and next time he does not try. He cannot read rapidly enough to enjoy a story, so he does not do much independent reading. He finds informational material hard to locate, and he substitutes his own experiences or studies pictures without reading the accompanying context. The problem is complicated because it is not always obvious that a child is avoiding situations calling for him to read. He chooses easy books and gives the appearance of being interested. He dawdles over his reading and is scolded for wasting time. He develops hobbies and other special interests in the classroom and is far too busy to find time for recreational reading. A first step in giving remedial help often is to develop a child's interest in reading and to convince him that he can learn.

MAKING REMEDIAL HELP COUNT

How does a teacher in a regular classroom go about giving remedial help? Essentially, the teaching methods are the same as those that would be used with any child with the same reading needs. However, the child who needs remedial teaching is one who has not profited from these methods in the past. Several adjustments in normal classroom procedures may be needed before he will profit from them now.

First, special attention needs to be given to the complicating factors that may be operating to make it difficult for the child to learn. This would include taking such steps as making sure that physical defects are cared for, helping the family understand the problem, and working with emotional tensions caused by unfortunate situations either at home or at school. Second, the retarded reader faces

the task of acquiring new skills more rapidly than the child who has made regular progress. He may be several years retarded and he needs to catch up. This means providing greater amounts of practice, and more practice directed toward specific weaknesses than is needed by the typical youngster. Third, because he is retarded in his reading skills, the child is likely to be more mature intellectually than the average child reading at the same level. This means that he has relatively more ability to understand the purposes of his reading activities. This should be capitalized upon by giving him more opportunities to analyze his own shortcomings and to discuss the purposes of his practice exercises. Fourth, the remedial case has often developed a hearty dislike of reading and sometimes a definite fear of it. Far from seeking opportunities to learn to read, he avoids them. These negative emotional overtones have to be dispelled.

Problems of providing remedial help in the regular classroom setting center, then, around finding time to give the additional help, developing confidence and interest in learning to read, and focussing practice activities as effectively as possible upon a child's problems.

Finding Time for Remedial Help

Capitalize on the full possibilities of a flexible classroom organization. When the general classroom organization is designed to meet the needs of individuals, there are relatively more opportunities to give special help to the child with a remedial problem. He is not usually as much alone in the classroom as his retardation would lead one to suppose. Often there are three or four children working at approximately his reading level. Some of these may be slow learners who are making satisfactory progress in terms of their abilities. Others may be youngsters who also need special help. These children may form a small reading group. As suggested in earlier chapters, this group may work together regularly throughout the year, using basal readers and work-type activities in a somewhat more systematic fashion than will the more able readers in the room. At times, these youngsters may continue to work as a group for special help in the reading related to unit activities in the content fields. Children who need remedial help may also fit very well into special groups meeting for short-time instruction. Sometimes a remedial spelling group will provide added help with word analysis. There may be another group working directly on word-study problems, or a group practicing to develop more effective reading speed A first step in finding time to

give remedial help is to fit the child into groups that most nearly meet his particular needs.

Flexibility in materials is possible as well as flexibility in grouping. If all the books available for a unit of work are at fifth-grade level, the retarded reader will have great difficulty sharing in any of the reading activities. If there are some second-grade books, he has a reading task within his power, and as he works on his part of the unit he secures some of the additional reading experience he so badly needs. Even if materials have to be written in experience-record form for the children who are the poorest readers, it is important to capitalize on every opportunity to encourage them to read.

In the schedules described in preceding chapters, there is time allotted for independent work. In these periods, when all the children are working on arithmetic, studying spelling, writing letters or reports, or concentrating on other skills, the retarded reader can put relatively more emphasis on reading. Some teachers have found it helpful to provide workbooks through which these children can proceed systematically, or to hectograph graded series of work-type activities for them. Teachers have also set up special game tables with various types of word wheels, flash cards, and other games at which children can work with reading partners. All such activities help to add to a child's total amount of practice in reading.

In a flexible classroom organization, teachers have relatively more time to work with individuals. Even five or ten minutes' help at regular intervals can make an appreciable difference in a child's progress. Some of this can be given during independent work periods. Some may be provided while the children are reading independently to locate the information needed for a unit of work. Some may be given as the other members of a child's reading group work silently. A few minutes may also be found by dismissing the children in a reading group one at a time and holding for a little extra practice the youngsters who have been having the most trouble. It takes planning to find time for the children in a room who need remedial help, but it can be done to a reasonably satisfying degree if full use is made of the possibilities for individualizing a teacher's help.

Make the most of special help from other teachers if it is available. In some school systems there will be teachers employed to give remedial help. Sometimes the most severely retarded children from several grades are grouped in an adjustment class and remain together for a year or more. This plan makes it possible for a teacher

to set up a very flexible schedule and to concentrate on children's special problems, but it may result in giving to one teacher a group with a wide range of reading needs and sometimes in throwing together many children who are emotionally disturbed. Such classes need to be small, and need to be in the hands of someone who has great talent for helping children to feel loved and secure. Precautions may also have to be taken to keep such groups from being filled with children who are slow learners or with those who have emotional problems but who are not in need of remedial help.

A plan for remedial help that involves the classroom teacher more directly is the one in which three or four children are sent to a remedial teacher for a special period each day. Usually the schedule is arranged so that the children go for help during the time when others in the class are also working on reading activities. This provides the intensive help a remedial case needs, but it may raise problems in coordinating his work with that of his class.

There do not always need to be teachers specially employed in order to develop a remedial center. In one school an art teacher, a teacher of crafts, and a regular classroom teacher, all of whom had free periods in their schedules and interest in teaching reading, devoted some of this time to remedial work. Occasionally a school schedule is planned so that primary children are dismissed early. If this is the case, their teachers may be able to give a period to remedial teaching. Such plans to use the time of existing personnel need to be set up with care, however, if overheavy schedules are not to be the result. It is important, also, to remember that all teachers do not have equal insight into children's emotional problems and equal command of the techniques of primary reading that are likely to be needed for remedial teaching. A free period in a schedule is not an adequate basis for selecting the person who is to give special remedial help.

When help from someone outside the classroom is provided for a child, his teacher's responsibility is to supplement this help as effectively as possible. The remedial teacher can do a better job if she can coordinate some of her work with what is going on in the classroom. In turn, her help may be enlisted in finding materials of the right difficulty level for use in regular classroom activities. She may also be able to share her diagnosis of the child's difficulty and be helpful in outlining steps that can be taken in the classroom to supplement her work.

Other children in the class will be aware of the fact that a child is being given special help. His activities need to be interpreted to them in a positive way. Sometimes work done in the remedial session—stories written, recreational reading, interesting games—can be given special recognition in the classroom. Well-timed comments such as "Wouldn't it be fine if we could have Miss —— here to help us with that." "Paul has been reading such an interesting book." "Sunny, you've been learning a lot about dividing words into syllables, can you help us?" can also do much to help to establish the prestige of a remedial center.

Help the home share the responsibility. When parents are genuinely concerned about a child's progress, it is sometimes difficult for them to sit back and let the school carry the full responsibility. From the teacher's point of view, opportunities for valuable additional reading experience are lost if the child never takes any of his reading home. While it is important that a child not be confused by conflicting teaching methods, whether they be the methods of home and school or those of the remedial teacher and the classroom teacher, there are many ways in which parents safely can give help.

An important first step is to help parents understand the remedial process. They may have a tendency to expect progress too quickly. Sometimes they do not understand the need for easy materials and are heartsick if a fourth-grader comes home with a second reader. Occasionally parents misinterpret genuine evidence of progress. They may, for example, be critical of inaccurate oral reading without realizing that a child's tendency to substitute words that fit in the context actually indicates that he is comprehending what he reads, or be concerned because he is uncertain of the sounds of some of the less frequently used letters, without realizing that he has grown tremendously in his ability to use larger and more helpful word parts. The time parents and teachers spend together studying the reading program is well invested, whether the child be in need of remedial help or one of the best readers in the room.

Some of the most effective help from parents comes in situations in which they can share without direct attempts to teach. They may give lavish praise when a child brings home a story he has practiced and reads it aloud. They may allow him time for recreational reading, take him to the library, help him to arrange bookcases and a special desk in his room, and perhaps, with the teacher's advice, buy him books. Occasionally they can play simple word games with him.

Sometimes, too, parents can help a child to gain status in his classroom in areas in which it is difficult for him to contribute from his reading. They may be able to take him on special trips so that he can report from firsthand experience, or help him find pictures or locate objects to take to school for an exhibit. Above everything else, cooperation between home and school may aid in convincing the child that all the people he likes the best are back of him, and are sure that he is going to make satisfactory progress.

Developing Confidence

Have a confident attitude in working with a child. Many remedial cases will need to be convinced that they can learn to read. Every teacher who gives remedial help must be prepared to sound interested, encouraging, and genuinely confident, even though progress is painfully slow. She is the one to whom the child looks for help. When he feels discouraged, her word may be about the only proof he has that he is making progress.

Several procedures can be helpful in convincing a child that his teacher has confidence in him. One is to be genuinely interested in him as a person, so that he will feel free to express his discouragement and to talk about his concerns. A second helpful procedure is to give a child a part in planning his activities so that he can share in his teacher's feeling that he is making progress. "You did very well with these today. Perhaps we don't need any more exercises like that." "You really are beginning to like to read, aren't you? Here's another book you should enjoy just as much." "You can time yourself on this one and see how much faster you are reading." A third technique that helps to build confidence is to discuss a child's problems with him frankly. If he had particular trouble with an exercise, it is usually better to admit it and then to proceed in a matter-of-fact way to make plans for more practice than it is to pretend that he has done well. Akin to this, a fourth technique is to provide business-like practice that helps him feel he is getting somewhere. "You surely did have trouble with this page. Let's see if we can figure out why. There's another page like it that you may try." These confidence-building procedures are important to use with any child. They assume special significance in the case of a youngster who is receiving remedial help because of his unique need to be convinced that he can learn.

Start with material with which the child can have early success. Since the retarded reader often comes to the new classroom sure that he is going to fail again, it is important to provide early concrete evidence that this time things are going to be different. One way to do this is to start with very easy practice materials. Care may need to be taken, however, to make sure that such materials are not too obviously intended for much younger children. Some youngsters will not mind working with books that are meant for lower grades if they are convinced that the practice is worth while, but others may be defeated from the start by this indication that their work is below grade.

Several procedures may be helpful in providing a child with the materials with which he should be working without embarrassing or discouraging him. One is the policy, suggested in earlier discussions of reading materials, of reserving at least one basal-reader series for retarded readers so that there can be no chance that a younger brother or sister is working with the same book. Sometimes it is even desirable to mimeograph materials so that the primary format will not be obvious. Often a special remedial workbook that contains easy materials written in upper-grade form may be useful. In informational- and recreational-reading activities, the fact that the retarded reader is using very easy books may be made less obvious if all children are given an opportunity to enjoy the pictures and stories in these same books. One tutor of a child who did not mind reading a preprimer in the classroom provided a special cover for the times when the child carried the book home on busses. The adjustments needed in order to provide the materials with which a child can have successful experiences will vary. The important thing is the way the particular youngster feels about his work.

Consider the use of professional-looking materials. Not all children who need remedial help will respond to typical classroom materials. Some will have had so many unsuccessful experiences, perhaps even to struggling through the same book twice because they have failed a grade, that their confidence in most regular teaching aids is shaken. There is very little evidence that mechanical devices, special sets of word cards, word games, or workbooks labelled *diagnostic* or *remedial* are actually any more helpful in developing reading skills than are regular classroom materials. However, the psychological effect on the learner may be positive. Here, at last, is something new,

and the child may approach the strange material with confidence and hope. Such special devices probably serve their most important function when a child is first beginning to make progress. Once he has had some feeling of success, that, in itself, can provide powerful motivation.

A device need not be expensive to look professional. A workbook different in style from those used by other children may serve. Writing one's own stories on a classroom typewriter may help. Using specially prepared word cards such as the Dolch cards,[8] keeping a file of hard words, trying to read words flashed with a simple hand-made tachistoscope, may all help to build the feeling that new methods are being used.

The kinesthetic, or tracing, approach used with success by Fernald[9] with severely retarded readers is another device that may appeal. This is a system where the child starts by tracing a word written for him by his teacher as he studies its configuration. When he feels that he knows it, he writes it without looking at it. Then he is given opportunities to use it in composing his own sentences and stories. These are typed before he has forgotten their contents and become part of his reading activities. This approach uses another sense as an avenue to learning. It provides novel reading matter, because the child reads his own stories, and it also gives him a certain amount of quick success which may help to break down his defeatist attitude.

Use records to help convince a child of his progress. Gold stars, charts of work accomplished, graphs showing the percentage of questions done correctly, and other concrete evidence that progress is being made have more place in the life of the remedial case than they do in that of other youngsters. Such devices are not primarily to stimulate a child to work, but to show him concretely that he is getting ahead. Even if he seems to be progressing slowly, his book list gives the evidence that he actually read five books this month. If his score is not good on today's exercises, the chart in the back of his workbook demonstrates that he usually does a very fine job. One teacher placed all the new words with which an eight-year-old was working on separate cards. After a specified number of review checks the child destroyed, with great ceremony, the cards he could read. Even this simple proof of his progress had definite encourage-

8 Edward W. Dolch, *Basic Sight Cards*. Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press.

9 Grace M. Fernald, *Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1943.

ment value. Typically, the more insight a child has into his own progress the less he will need such extrinsic devices. In the beginning, such concrete evidence that he is on his way can be helpful.

Help a child begin to interpret errors as signs of progress. Once a child has had some successful experiences, it is important to take him into more difficult materials without having him lose confidence. As his work gets harder he is certain to make more mistakes, and he needs to be prepared for this. Positive comments are usually more effective than negative ones. "You're doing this so well, I believe we can try you on something harder." "No trouble at all with that one? It looks as if it was a little easy for you, wasn't it?" "This page is quite hard, but it will help us see where you need more practice. Would you like to try it?" Techniques such as these help a child to face his errors, not as signs that he is again failing but as evidence that at last he is learning to read.

Help the child feel that he is a contributing class member. One important way to convince a child that his reading skill is improving is to help him to take his full share in classroom activities involving reading. Providing easy informational materials upon which the retarded reader can report is one step in this direction. Sometimes it is worth while to devote a remedial session to helping him locate and read the material he needs. Once in a while a situation will arise where it is important to spend considerable time helping a child perform a difficult reading task. In one Christmas assembly a retarded reader wanted very much to read the description that accompanied the class tableaux. In a fourth-grade play, read behind the scenes as a radio production, a youngster set his heart on reading the part of his favorite character. In each case the teacher took extra time to help the child learn the hard words and practice the oral reading so that he could do a creditable job; and in each case the gain in confidence far outweighed the time spent.

The emotional concomitants of not being able to read well are lessened in a classroom where there are many other ways of becoming a contributing group member. When a book is difficult, a poor reader may sometimes report on the pictures. Again, he may be the one to tell about a firsthand experience or to make some other contribution that does not call for extensive reading skill. In a classroom where the total program is broad, a child's achievement in number or in music, his special collection of beetles, or his science demonstration may gain him recognition. Achieving group status is a basic human

need. It is important to make a special effort to help the child who has reading difficulty find some means of becoming an accepted group member.

Developing Interest in Reading

Provide many pleasant contacts with books. When a child who has been given remedial help begins to read widely for enjoyment, he is well on the way toward rapid growth in reading. He needs to be given many pleasant contacts with books. Hearing stories read by the teacher, participating in story groups where children are doing the reading, and listening to parents read stories at home provide some of these contacts, but the child also needs every encouragement to read for himself. In the beginning, the literary quality of the book is not as important as a child's interest in it. Within limits, even comic books may be acceptable. It is particularly important that many of the books be very easy for the youngster whose reading is retarded. Even length sometimes makes a difference. This is especially true if a child is a slow reader who normally plods for days, or perhaps weeks, to finish a book. Often it is helpful to rebind stories from basal readers so that the retarded reader can have the satisfaction of finishing a small "book" quickly. Even less than other children in the class should the remedial case be under criticism if he builds a long recreational reading list by choosing very short books. The important thing is to start him to read.

Choose materials that capitalize on a child's special concerns. Occasionally a severely disturbed child will resist all efforts to interest him in reading. "I'm going to work with engines. I won't need to read." "Books are sissy stuff." "I'm not going to take courses in high school where you have to read." Such attitudes are not easily changed by argument, even though it may be suspected that they are in large measure a protection against failing again. Sometimes it is necessary to start with the only purpose for reading that the child can see. One youngster said that he was not interested in anything except airplanes, and pulled out of his pocket a collection of pictures. Some of the planes he could recognize, but there were others whose names he wanted to know. For the first few weeks these cards became the center of various word-recognition activities. Once this boy saw that he could learn to read the names of the planes, he began to try to pick out some of the words in the descriptions on the backs of the cards. Weeks later he started into a simple book on planes. Another

severely retarded boy, approaching high school age, said that he would never bother to read except that he wanted to get a driver's license. Materials from the Automobile Club started the reading sessions. If a child will attempt to read nothing else, lotto, authors, or other games may at least start him looking at the configurations of words.

Write materials for children to meet special needs. On many occasions a teacher will write material herself in order to have something that is of interest to a retarded reader. One nine-year-old, sophisticated beyond her years, said that she didn't care to read anything except beauty columns. Since few of these are written at second-grade level, the teacher cut out advertisements from popular magazines and rewrote the beauty suggestions. For a time, this child's reading vocabulary was somewhat overweighted with terms related to beauty culture, but she gradually began to read stories about girls whose homes had some of the glamor that her own did not provide. When the poorest readers in a third grade wanted to dramatize the story the teacher had been reading to the class, she hectographed a simplified version for them. It is time consuming to prepare such materials, but they are well worth the investment if children begin to read.

Sometimes a child's own stories serve as his first reading-matter. These may be dictated to the teacher or written by the child with the help of a file of spelling and vocabulary cards in a variation of the kinesthetic approach described earlier. Usually they are then typed so that the child can read them more easily. These materials may find their way eventually to a class newspaper, to a class notebook on a special project, to a story corner of the bulletin board, or just into the child's special notebook. The tasks of proofreading, learning new words, and perhaps preparing to read the story aloud to other children all provide useful practice. No opportunity to encourage a child to read can be overlooked in planning remedial work.

Making Special Practice Attractive and Effective

Direct the child's practice to his specific difficulty. Remedial activities need to be focussed directly on a child's difficulties. This calls for the use of all the techniques for studying children's strengths and weaknesses discussed in Chapter XIII. However, the child who is in need of remedial help is likely to have had trouble over several years. This often means that his difficulties have not been obvious. It means,

too, that he may have peculiar gaps in his skills and, in self-defense, have developed ways of bluffing that hide some of his weaknesses. His successes and failures need to be studied without prejudice to see exactly what he can and cannot do. Persons skilled in the diagnosis of reading difficulty are often remarkably adept at catching minor clues to inadequate techniques. This adeptness comes in part because skilled diagnosticians have had experience in studying patterns of errors and in part because they understand thoroughly the process of learning to read. Teachers develop the same sensitivities through their study from day to day of the reading needs of the children in their classes.

Careful diagnostic study of retarded readers will reveal some children who are victims of general retardation and whose ways of working are typical of those of youngsters in much lower grades. There may be, in fifth grade, a child whose pattern of skills is very much like that of a second-grader. There may even be an occasional child who has not progressed much beyond preprimer materials. Children who show general retardation will need reading programs that, in many ways, are typical of those planned for primary children reading at the same level. However, the amount of intensive practice with work-type activities designed to develop word-study skills and to build comprehension skills is likely to be greater than it would be in the corresponding primary program, and the amount of discussion and follow-up of basal-reader stories somewhat less.

Other youngsters will have specific weaknesses—an inefficient approach to new words, a word-by-word style of reading, ineffectiveness in establishing clear purposes for reading, inability to select appropriate details, and others. In such cases, practice needs to bear directly upon the inadequate skill. How direct this help sometimes needs to be is illustrated by the case of the youngster who had had considerable remedial work and who exclaimed in a diagnostic session, "Word families, *at, cat, mat, bat,* I know them all!" This he did, when the words were of one syllable. His problem, however, lay in seeing the parts of two- and three-syllable words and in blending them. This particular skill had not been stressed in the simple word-study activities with which he had been laboring. On the other hand, children can have combinations of difficulties. For example, a youngster who has been struggling with materials in which the vocabulary has been much too difficult may develop poor habits of comprehension. Such a child will need some experiences with very simple ma-

terials to encourage him to think about the meaning of what he is reading, and some with materials with more difficult vocabulary to help him develop effective word-study skills. Part of the art of remedial teaching lies in achieving a proper balance in activities.

A child who is reading at a grade level lower than his actual grade in school is likely to make errors typical of younger children. Intermediate-grade teachers who work with severe problems of retardation need to develop a primary teacher's point of view. Mistakes that seem baffling to a teacher of older children actually may be quite typical of the performance of a youngster reading at the level at which the remedial case is working. Practice can be fitted more readily to a child's needs when his difficulties from day to day are correctly interpreted.

Finding enough interesting practice material at the correct difficulty level for the remedial case is not always easy. In many classrooms the problem is complicated by the fact that the materials must be such that the child can work alone, counting on his teacher for rather brief periods of help. Sometimes a regular primary reader and workbook will serve. However, typical primary materials do not always interest an older child. Often it will be more effective to use workbooks in which the activities are developed around a short article with which the workbook page begins. Teacher-made worksheets have been suggested as a means of supplementing these commercial materials. The actual form of the work-type exercise need be no different from that which might be used with a child who is making regular progress. Descriptions of activities appropriate for specific skills are included at a number of points in preceding chapters.

It is just as important to be selective in using workbook materials for remedial purposes as it is to be selective when they are part of the regular reading program. A workbook is usually planned to give well-balanced practice in a variety of skills. This is effective for the child whose retardation is general, but not for the one who has a specific weakness. A slow reader, for example, might well be assigned workbook activities calling for the general gist of a paragraph, but he should not be expected to do word-study activities that may reinforce his present tendency to work with painstaking attention to details Only someone who has worked with a child can determine the experiences he needs.

No matter what other skills are developed, a remedial program has missed its mark if a child does not also begin to enjoy reading for

its own sake. Time needs to be scheduled definitely for activities designed to develop interest in reading, such as those described in the preceding section. When these recreational-reading activities are planned around books of the correct difficulty level, they, too, help to provide the extensive reading experience that is important in the progress of a retarded reader.

Plan practice activities that call for thoughtful reading. The child who is severely retarded typically has had many experiences where the materials he tried to read made little sense to him. His practice activities need to be planned so that he has maximum opportunity to learn to read for meaning. This implies that the proportion of games or other activities in which words are met out of context usually would be light in comparison to those in which the child reads a short paragraph, answers a riddle, answers questions based on a short story, follows directions in order to draw a picture, or does something else that requires him to think about the meaning of what he has read. This is essentially the same basis on which work-type activities would be chosen for any child. It is of particular concern in planning remedial work only because the child's previous reading experiences are likely to have developed unfortunate habits and attitudes.

Keep the child's practice interesting and varied. It is important to keep the many hours of practice needed by a retarded reader from becoming boring. This is another reason for using materials where thoughtful reading is required—short stories, paragraphs that provide interesting information, riddles, workbooks that present a new story with each new page. It is another reason, too, for exerting every effort to interest a child in recreational reading so that some of the experience he needs is supplied by stories of his own choosing. In providing practice activities, it is often important to plan to introduce a new challenge from time to time. Sometimes a reading game can serve. It can be helpful, also, to allow a child to choose some of his own practice activities. He may even help to prepare some of the materials—make his own flash cards, plan his own game, develop his own file of words to help with his spelling, devise a simple tachistoscope. The graphs, stars, and other concrete records of progress discussed earlier can also be of use in keeping interest high. If a child comes to a tutor for extended practice sessions it may be possible to read to him, to take turns with him in reading aloud, to interest him

in construction activities for which he must read the directions, or even to stop work entirely for a day in order to take a special excursion. For many children who are retarded, reading has been a confusing, meaningless, and frustrating experience. Remedial activities need to be in sharp contrast.

Provide for consistent practice. Part of the secret of making remedial work effective is to give consistent guidance. Small amounts of daily help are usually preferable to remedial sessions twice a week, and these, in turn, are preferable to longer weekly periods. In the earlier suggestions of ways of finding time for remedial help, a pattern was proposed that would give the child several kinds of reading activities within the classroom, in each of which he would participate regularly, and through each of which he would receive some regular guidance. When materials are adjusted so that full use can be made of every situation in which the child may be given an opportunity to read, his day's activities often can add up to a surprising amount of excellent experience.

Continue with special help until new techniques are thoroughly mastered. A child who has once faced frustration and discouragement in learning to read should not be placed in situations where he may be defeated again. Especially in the beginning, a slow pace and ample practice may be most important in building confidence. As a child's skill begins to approach that of his classmates it is often better to continue to adjust the difficulty of the books he reads and to keep him in a group where he can be given special help than it is to push him into activities that may cause him trouble. If he is in a special reading center or is working with a tutor, this may mean letting him continue to have the help even though there seems to be a chance that he might be able to handle regular classroom work without it. When the special help is discontinued, the teacher should take particular pains to help the child fit into the regular classroom work successfully. Many suggestions have been made in preceding chapters of ways of giving a little extra assistance to a child who is learning slowly so that he may be able to participate successfully in regular classroom activities. These same techniques can help to bridge the gap for the remedial case.

Help the child share in appraising his progress and in planning next steps. The most interesting practice loses much of its force if a child goes at it blindly. The same procedures that help other children

to analyze their strengths and weaknesses and to understand the purposes of special practice will also help the retarded reader. The reasons for practice activities can be talked through before a child undertakes them. He can help to analyze his successful experiences so that he knows what he has done well, and to study his failures so that he knows where he needs more practice. Three or four children working together may discuss what helped them to recognize a new word or how they located the answer to a question. In areas such as word analysis, their greater maturity may make them able to deduce rules which may facilitate their progress. Eventually the retarded reader should develop the same healthy interest in taking an objective look at his achievement and in sharing in plans for his next activities that is displayed by the child who is making normal progress.

Independence is the final goal for all children. When a child begins to understand what it means to be a good reader, takes an active interest in learning to read more skillfully, and, most important, finds in being able to read a way of solving his problems and a source of personal satisfaction, he is well on his way toward the eventual mastery of adult reading skills.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN APPRAISING THE REMEDIAL HELP PROVIDED FOR CHILDREN

Is a careful study made of all possible factors that might be affecting a child's progress in reading?

Is the classroom program flexible enough to allow time to give special help to individuals?

Are administrative problems in the school, such as class size, solved in such a way as to facilitate the teacher's efforts to give help to individuals?

Are there sufficient easy recreational and informational materials to provide the successful and enjoyable reading experiences needed by the retarded reader?

Is the atmosphere in which the child works one of enthusiasm and confidence?

Is every effort being made to interest the child in reading?

Are practice activities planned in terms of the child's special needs?

Are there ample interesting work-type materials for special practice?

Is the child given a share in planning his own program and in appraising his progress?

Is there continuous study of the effectiveness with which the total school program is meeting individual needs?

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